



Shanmukha

A Cultural Journal

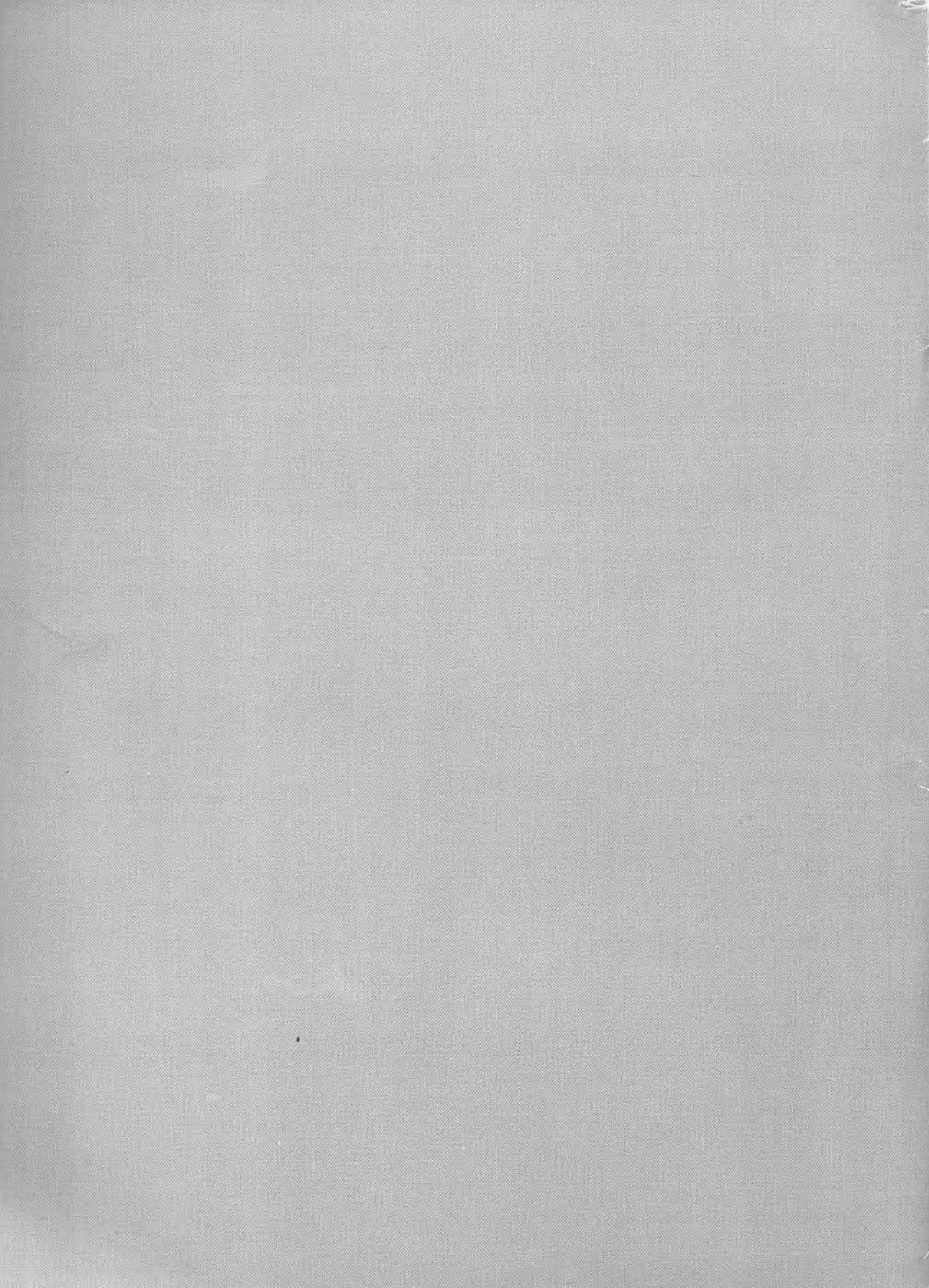


Shri Subbaraya Pillai
(1914-2008)



Pandanallur Tradition
Place of Bharatanatyam





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Front Cover :

Celebrating Centenary of Pandanallur Subbaraya Pillai and Alarmel Valli's 50 years on stage.
Pandanallur Tradition: Courtesy www.heritagetown.org

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Printed & Published by Shri. V. S. Amarnath Sury on behalf of Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.) & designed & printed by Concise Graphics & Marketing and published from Sri Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Sangeetha Vidyalaya, 292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Sion (East), Mumbai - 400022.

Editor : Smt. Radha Nambodiri, Registered with Registrar of Newspapers for India. R. N. No. 27938/1975
Website : <http://www.shanmukhananda.com/Shanmukha Journal.html>

IN FOCUS

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever; its loveliness increases; it will never pass into nothingness", said John Keats, which brings to mind a vision of a maiden of ethereal beauty. Yes, dear readers, we are indeed talking of Alarmel Valli, the demure, petite, renowned Bharatanatyam danseuse par excellence, the foremost exponent of the Pandanallur Bani who has completed fifty glorious years of stage performances- a feat not achieved by many. In her interview with Jyothi Mohan, she attributes much of her success to her mother who gave her the courage to follow her dreams and to her gurus Shri Chokkalingam Pillai and Shri Subbaraya Pillai who gave of their art unstintingly and with total commitment. She also speaks of the close association between music and dance where she sees dance as visual music.

The Centenary tribute to Pandanallur Subbaraya Pillai by Jyothi Mohan brings out his major qualities as a teacher-his dedication, integrity, commitment and generosity of spirit.

Every Vaggeyakara has an Ishtadevata and Thyagaraja believed that the Rama mantra was the road to salvation, says Dr. Bhuvaneswari G. in her article 'Taraka Mantra- Saint Thyagaraja'.

Readers get to learn about the influence of Lalita Sahasranama in the kritis on Devi composed by Shri Syama Sastri in Dr.Veenalakshmi V's article, 'Influence of Lalita Sahasranama in Syama Sastri kritis'.

Divyaprabandham, popularly known as Naalayira Divya Prabandham is a set of divine verses in Tamil sung in praise of Lord Vishnu by saints called Alvars. Our Alvars including Aandal have made a mention of several musical instruments like the veena, flute, mridangam, to name a few, in these verses. Read about this in Dr. M.A. Bhageerathi's Tamil article 'Divyaprabandhattil Isaikkaruvigalaippatriya Seydigal'.

Paying tribute to their guru, Vidwan T.R.Subramanyam, Vasundhra Rajagopal and Mohan Santhanam speak of his prowess and confidence in pallavi singing, his immense patience and novel ways of teaching.

P.Vasanth Kumar pays a tribute to Shri.V.Subrahmaniam, a senior disciple of Shri Semmangudi Sreenivasier. Shweta Iyer pays a glowing tribute to her grandfather Shri V.Subrahmaniam in whom she sees all the five essential qualities of a leader. For her he was a leader in the Carnatic music world apart from being an inspiring teacher.

As always, Tukkada keeps you busy solving the Quiz on Sangeeta and Natya.

Jyothi Mohan, Nalini Dinesh and Vasumathi Arvind report on events that took place in the quarter in Sabha Roundup and Happenings at the Vidyalaya.

The front cover of the last issue was a collage depicting the major events that took place during the diamond jubilee year of the Sabha.

Jyothi Mohan

Alarmel Valli recently celebrated 50 years of stage performances, a feat not accomplished by many. She continues to mesmerise the cognoscenti as well as the layman with her charm, expressive eyes, lyrical grace and dynamism. Alarmel Valli looks exactly as she did five decades ago and this prompted me to seek her out for an interview when she was in Mumbai to perform and be felicitated by the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha. Face to face, she looked even more petite than she did on stage with all her finery. That prompted my first question to her.



What exercise regime do you follow to remain so slim over all these years and yet so physically strong despite your diminutive frame?

Practice, practice and more practice is the only regimen I have followed! My strength comes from dance. You will be surprised to know I was actually very sickly as a child and so thin, that some well-meaning family friends advised my mother to stop my dance classes! Thankfully, an uncle who was an illustrious doctor, whose daughter was already a student of Pandanallur Chokkalingam Pillai, reassured her that it was dance which would keep me well. And so it has. It is relentless, regular practice, that to this day gives me stamina. I remember as a child, I would sometimes complain

that my legs ached while doing the Araimandi. But my mother would exhort me not to take it easy and to persist. "Your mind must control your body," she would say! Shraddha, sadh and bhakti in dance can give us a strength that goes beyond the physical, that makes the seemingly impossible, possible.

Tell me a little about your childhood and school days.

I was an only child, but grew up in a joint family, surrounded by cousins, aunts and uncles, in a rambling, old colonial house in Chennai. It was an ideal environment for children, with its fruit orchards, cricket pitch and shrubbery-filled grounds. I was a book-worm and that, together with the fact that I was not good at the more robust sports that my cousins excelled at, made me something of a loner. I had a very tight routine. I had to wake up at 5.30 every morning to be ready for dance class which would begin punctually at 6 am. My Gurus, Pandanallur Chokkalingam Pillai and his son, Sri Subbaraya Pillai were wonderful. They gave of their art unstintingly and with total commitment. Subbaraya Pillai would completely lose count of the time while teaching and I was often late to school. In fact, my mother invariably had to gently remind him of the time, before he would stop teaching and let me go. I was fortunate that traffic in Chennai in those tranquil days, was very light. Even then, I would reach school only after assembly and would sneak into class in the nick of time before the teacher came in. Dance was always given priority by my mother. She would often tell me it was a 'sacred commitment' - a prayer and that there could be no half-measures in the arts. On no account was I permitted to miss dance class, even for a family function, or school picnic. I followed a strict and rigorous discipline, thanks to my mother and I am deeply grateful that she gave me the focus I needed as a child and the courage to follow my dreams. I owe much of my success to her and my gurus.

What do you think of children who come to learn now?

Children today, are incredibly intelligent, talented and motivated. There is huge potential, but at the same time, they have to contend with many adverse influences, pressures. The TV, Internet, not to mention, the cell phone, are potent distractions. In such circumstances, it is a challenge to develop creativity and sensitivity. I find, as a teacher, that students these days, in general, tend to

be more easily distracted and their powers of observation therefore, tend to be less acute than that of dance students in the past. During my childhood, we had no television or internet. Books and story-telling were an integral part of my growing years. Besides school and later, college, I also had time to study music, French and Odissi. All this shaped my creative growth. During dance classes, we students had no access to recording devices. Master would not even let us write down the lessons. We had to observe, reflect and internalise. I feel this early conditioning enriched my creativity and contributed to my growth as a dancer.

How easy was it to get stage performances during your childhood? These days it is so very difficult to perform unless you have political or money clout. Most dancers languish for lack of opportunity.

My heart goes out to the talented young dancers who are unable to get a break in our aggressively PR driven dance field. Personally, I have been blessed in this respect. In my early years, the dance world was not so commercialised. I remember, soon after my arangetram, which was very well-received, a senior student's mother recommended my name to Sri Yagna Raman of Krishna Gana Sabha for a performance. After that, he would invite me every year to dance. So also, with many other Sabhas. Organisers sought you out if they heard you were talented, or had seen you dance. Dancers of my generation came up in a dance world that was not over-crowded, as it is today.

Music knowledge is absolutely necessary to become a good dancer, I feel. Since you have had the privilege of learning from the legendary Muktamma, what is your opinion?

I have often said that I see dance as visual music. My personal style of dance, both in Abhinaya and nritya is based on this perception. I remember, Smt. Balasaraswathi once said to my mother, "Abhinaya cannot be taught. It should flower in its own." It was only when I studied music with Muktha Amma, that I understood what she meant. Studying Padams and Javalis with Muktha Amma, suddenly, every karvai and sangati found instinctive expression in corresponding movements of my body. It was not something deliberate or thought out, but a spontaneous response, when I felt my very body was "listening" to the music. My classes with Muktha Amma shaped my approach to dance, as one where, ideally, I feel the music dances and that I sing with my body. Music is the key to my understanding and interpretation of dance and particularly, of Abhinaya.

The highlight of every recital of yours is your interpretation of verses from Sangam poetry. When and how did you get involved with Sangam poetry?

Every Sunday, I would visit my maternal grandfather. He led me into a magic world of poetry and classic literature- Sangam poetry, Kamban, Shakespeare, Kalidasa, the list was long and diverse. These influences enriched my life and contributed to my creativity as a dancer. Many years later, my mother brought a Sangam poem to my attention, and said - 'Isn't this ideal for dance?!' It was a poem about a moment of transition in a young girl's life, between childhood and adolescence. Though so ancient, it was also contemporary and something that anyone, even today, can relate to. One of the poems was about a mother whose daughter elopes and it carried a message about coming to terms with loss and learning to let go. The themes are external. Sangam poems are richly metaphoric, subtle and emotionally complex and they constantly reaffirm the link between man and nature. For me, they are ideal as source material for dance. In the 28 years or so that I have worked on these poems, from most of the anthologies, the Kalithogai, Kurunthogai, Natrinai, Purananooru, Agananooru, Paripadal, I have never ceased to be fascinated, amazed and moved by them.

Do you also set it to music?

When I read a poem, I have a very clear idea of how the music should flow. I feel the karvais and sangatis in a song must convey feeling, as evocatively and powerfully, sometimes, even more so

than the text. For the Sangam compositions, I was fortunate to have a remarkably creative singer and composer like Prema Ramamoorthy. She worked with me over many years and could understand my perception of music, to give melodic form to my vision of the text. I discuss with my singer exactly where I need a brigha, a long karvai or a particular sangati, to evoke a mood - or an image, like a buzzing fly or a stormy night, for instance. In my choreography of Sangam poems, I try to interpret them so that I can evoke the poetry of word, melody and movement. I am particular that the music and dance should blend together seamlessly. Of course, this calls for innumerable rehearsals, which can be quite a trying experience for most dance musicians!

What are your impressions about the current classical dance scene?

Today, there is enormous talent and there are many gifted, hard-working young dancers, who are dynamic and accomplished. But attitudes and approaches to teaching and learning dance have changed drastically and I feel this has impacted, not only on the form, but also on the spirit of the dance. Our classical dance is a joyous celebration, not only of the body, but of mind and spirit. In the past, we spent hours at the feet of our Gurus, imbibing not merely grammar and technique, but also aesthetic and artistic values. It took years of rigorous practice and sadhana, before we could internalise the dance grammar, technique and emotional content, to create and improvise. Patience and humility were integral to studying dance. Over the years I came to realise that one lifetime is not sufficient to master this art - and that no matter how brilliant the dancer, the art is always greater.

Today globalisation and the info-technology boom have given our dance a global profile and presence. But there has also been a negative impact. There is an impatience for quick results and instant formulae to success. The gradual process of evolving as a creative dancer and what was, at times, a process of absorbing by osmosis, is often replaced by package deals and speeded-up teaching methods. But instant, packaged food can never taste like the original, can it? The 'made-easy' approach, when compounded by easy recording technology and the advent of the DVD 'guru', often results in dance that is imitative and sensationalistic, but lacking in depth or originality. These are amongst the challenges faced by young dancers today.

You have evolved a style of your own. What are its key characteristics? Are there any students to take this ahead after you?

My parent style is the Pandanallur bani, as taught by Pandanallur Chokkalingam Pillai and Pandanallur Subbaraya Pillai. But Subbaraya Pillai sir not only gave me a sound technique and rich dance vocabulary, he also gave me the freedom to evolve in my own personal way. And, since my masters never stood up and demonstrated, while teaching, I was able to evolve as a dancer, without the danger of imitation. So while my style is recognisably the Pandanallur style, it is also distinctly my own. In my early years as a dancer, both masters were evolving the style, to give it a seamless quality, where a line would be perfect, but also fluid. I follow this ideal of a 'fluid line'. But most of all, my personal style is rooted in musicality of movement and in the poetry of movement.

My best students, unfortunately for me, live and work in the US - like Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy and Meena Rajagopal. Though they choreograph their own work, in principle, they stay true to the principles I have taught them. What I teach my students, is not my own style, which has evolved over the decades, from my personal experience and understanding of dance and music, but the Pandanallur bani as taught by my masters. Once they are able to internalise the dance, I would like them to evolve in their own way. I would not wish my students to become clones of me and I warn them of the dangers of this approach. But when the guru is also a performing dancer, it is not easy to keep students from imitating personal stylistic aspects!

Do you think that learning from DVDs and recordings posted on the internet will slowly impact the Guru-shishya relationship?

The proliferation of dance DVDs and the easy access to endless dance recordings on You Tube has definitely had a definite and powerful impact on dance. I have often spoken of the advent of the 'DVD guru' and the resultant 'global bani'. Given the dearth of sufficient good gurus and the huge demand for dance teaching across the world, developments like these, or even teaching on Skype seem inevitable. The old Guru Sishya parampara was based on a very different approach to teaching. Gurus like mine, embodied the collective consciousness of many generations of gurus. They transmitted knowledge, not by literal explanation, analysis or teaching by rote, but often, through the process of osmosis as it were. They taught me the techniques, but also enriched my imagination and gave me keys to understanding and receiving aesthetic and artistic principles. Most importantly, they transmitted vital values of beauty and truth. When I create, or dance, it is a crystallisation of my thought processes and my experience of life and art. The songs and poems are just outlines to which I add the colours and nuances to bring the picture to life. When one learns from the electronic media, how does one translate subtle nuances and subtexts? How does one transmit intangible perceptions?



Today, as a result of the new modes of teaching, many of the unique stylistic variations in dance are fading away and melting into one homogenous bani - a global bani. For instance, the curved, horizontal line of the *natyarambham* seems to be increasingly replaced by the diagonal straight line, which is easier to maintain. In this context of changing forms and vocabularies, I feel it is vital for those of us who have had the good fortune to inherit great individualistic banis like Pandanallur, to pass on this rich legacy and to share it.

Dancers feel the Margam is outdated and are forever trying to be innovative. What do you feel?

Tradition gives us immense scope to innovate. In the right hands, the margam can blossom anew with every performance. It is only a framework for a performance and it offers me infinite possibilities for exploring diverse moods, themes and characters. In the Margam format, we can rework old songs, compose new ones, incorporate new ideas and improvise all the time. I choose my song or theme, because it touches a chord in me. Doing something merely to be different - novelty for the sake of novelty - does not interest me. To be able to move the audience, cutting across all barriers of language and culture, to leave a lasting impact, is the hallmark of a truly creative artiste who brings integrity to his or her work.

On that final and confident note I brought the interview to an end as she had a flight to catch and it was already late. Her humility is a testimony to the oft-repeated statement that no matter how great an artist you are, the art is always greater than you. The Pandanallur tradition has a passionate and committed torchbearer in Padma Bhushan Alarmel Valli.

Jyothi Mohan is a Bharatanatyam guru and faculty member of the Vidyalaya

Jyothi Mohan



Shri Subbaraya Pillai (1914-2008)

Pandanallur Subbaraya Pillai, directly learnt from his grandfather, legendary Pandanallur Meenakshisundaram Pillai. A descendent of the Thanjavur Quartet, Subbaraya Pillai was the son of Guru Chokkalingam Pillai. They are the creators and repository of the Pandanallur style of Bharathanatyam. These three Gurus had direct access to the Tanjore Quartet compositions as part of their family heritage. Subbaraya Pillai spent his childhood and adolescence as apprentice nattuvanar, training in the home and school of his grandfather Minakshisundaram Pillai. The tutelage under his grandfather continued until he was 28.

Later, he came with his father, Chokkalingam Pillai, to Madras and jointly taught with him at a school at Egmore in Madras. After his father's death, he continued to teach at a school in Kilpauk. In his eighties, he retired from his teaching at the school but continued teaching at his home.

Together they groomed eminent dancers like Alarmel Valli and Meenakshi Chittaranjan among others. Says Valli who joined the Egmore class, "In an old corporation school with a leaking roof, sooty atmosphere and a railway track close by, these masters created a temple of art. With the support of Sarangapani Iyengar, they pioneered the concept of the 10-day Natyakala Conference in December 1947, where demonstrations in the morning and performances in the evening were conducted with many outstation artistes participating. Subsequently, Subbaraya Pillai headed the Lalitha Subramaniam Natya Palli for many years.

He was a quiet, reserved man, who was proud of his heritage and satisfied about having dedicated his life to preserving a precious family tradition. He held art very close to his heart. His students speak of him with great affection. Besides total dedication, Guru Subbaraya Pillai was also known for his generosity of spirit. His students reiterate that though he did the original choreography, they were free to add their own ideas. He would often say, "I have given you the foundation, now build on it." He was a man of principles and taught all students with integrity and commitment. It did not matter to him whether they wanted to make a profession of it or not. Similarly, he would not agree to put up any student in an arangetram unless he or she was ready for it. To him the art came first. He would never compromise.

The Pandanallur style practised by his forefathers was characterised by short, crisp jathis and subtle abhinaya. Subbaraya Pillai has rounded the edges and added fluidity to the style. He explored beauty in every movement. "He wanted me to bring in the joy and sensuous aspect. Do not dance like a zombie," he frequently admonished me! But the principle of tight control was emphasised for bhava. Sancharis were allowed, but only to the point and he eschewed over dramatisation. They represented a lofty dance tradition. "Vadyar's words still ring in my ears. Unfurl your arms, don't fling them out. Don't stomp, use light and shade in footwork. Never allow *sarakku* (substance) to be overshadowed by *minukku* (glitter). To him, the *kulukku nadai* was very important and I spent hours practising it to his satisfaction! I was indeed fortunate to come under these great masters who were ever so eager to teach, to share their knowledge with no expectations of any kind and totally uninterested in commercial considerations.

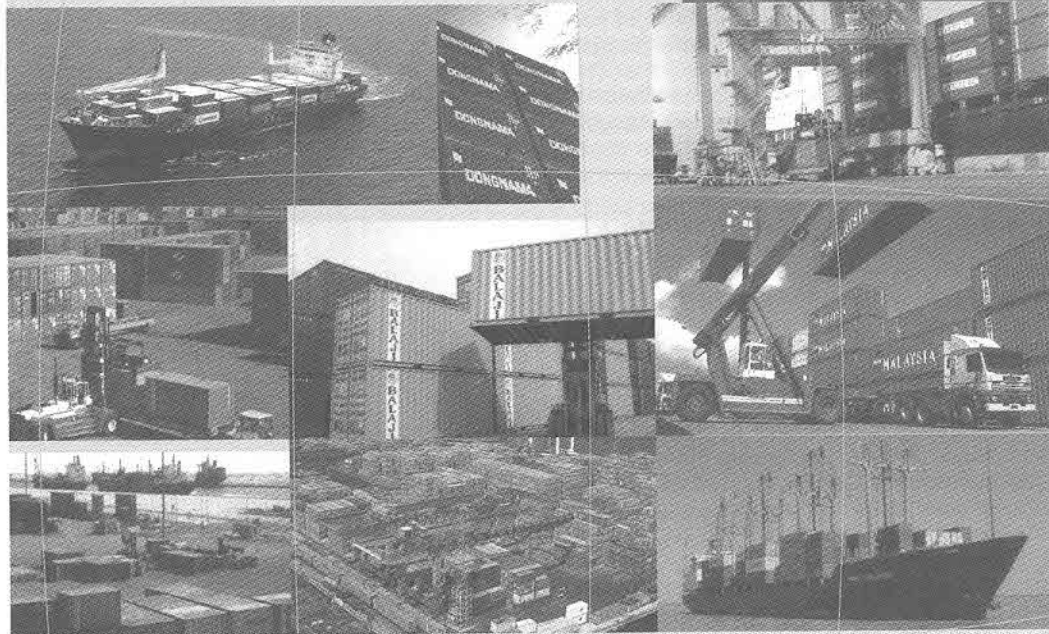
Guru Subbaraya Pillai received many awards chief among them being the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, the Kalaimamani title bestowed by the Iyal Isai Nataka Manram, both in 1979, the Music Academy's Natyacharya Award in 1995, and Nritta Peranayar title from Chidambaram Natyanjali soon after. Natyarangam's veteran guru award and the Natya Kalanidhi award by ABHAI (Association of Bharatanatyam Artists of India) (2006) were also conferred upon him.

Subbaraya Pillai took his art to several countries around the world. He passed away in Chennai on the 12th of May 2008.

Jyothi Mohan is a Bharatanatyam guru and faculty member of the Vidyalyaya.

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Dr. Bhuvaneshwari G.



Saint Thyagaraja

In the history of Indian Music, beginning from Tevaram, Tiruppugazh, Ashtapadi, Tarangam to compositions of Annamacharya, Purandaradasar, Thyagaraja and other vaggeyakaras belonging to ancient, medieval and modern periods, Bhakti mingled with music reigned supreme. Generally each vaggeyakara chose an Ishta devata or God to whom he had total devotion and composed kritis in praise of his favourite deity.

Saint Thyagaraja chose Lord Shri Rama as his Ishta devata and the majority of his compositions are in praise of Lord Rama. It is said that the divine sage Narada himself instructed Thyagaraja about the intricacies of the science of music and presented him with two texts Svaranavam and Naradeeyam. This incident has been referred to in the charana of the kriti *Swararagasudharasa* in Shankarabharanam set to Adi tala.

Rama Nama Tapas: A great incident happened in Thyagaraja's life when he was 18 years old, which turned his life to the sacred path. One day, a saint named Haridas (Rama Krishna Yatindra) from Kancheepuram came to Thyagaraja and asked him to chant Rama nama 96 crores of times. On an average Thyagaraja chanted about 1,25,000 Rama nama everyday and completed the task in 21 years. More than a Rama Nama Japa, it was a Rama Tapas. Even after completion (ie. chanting Rama Mantra for 96 crores of times), Thyagaraja did not get the physical darshan of Lord Rama. He became quite depressed and restless. Three months later, one day he heard a knock at the front door of his house. On opening the door, he was astonished and thrilled to see Lord Rama in all his beauty. Suddenly, he burst forth with words "बालकनकमय" in Atana raga – Adi tala. The Pallavi of this kriti *Elaneedayaradu* is where he is conversing with his personal deity. This kriti portrays the vivid description of Lord Rama in all his splendor and glory. This kriti starts in Devabhasha – Sanskrit (Anupallavi) and then it changes to Telugu (mother tongue) in the Pallavi and Charana. Rama's synonyms and beauteous form are described vividly in this kriti. The Charana starts with "Rara devadideva" – who is the Lord of Devas. Only a few Telugu words are used in this kriti.

Importance of Rama Nama Mantra or Taraka Mantra: The famous Mahamantras "Om Namō Narayanaya" and "Om Namō Namassivaya" have taken many sadhakas across the ocean of life and death. The letters RA taken from Narayanaya and MA taken from Namassivaya, these two Mahamantras chanted together as RAMA forming the quintessence of both these mantras is a sure path to heaven. Hence the purificatory Mantra "Rama" assumes supremacy. It is said that Saint Valmiki attained Rishihood by chanting this powerful Rama Mantra. Chiranjeevi Anjaneya (Hanuman) is supposed to be chanting Rama Mantra incessantly.

In Shrimad Adhyatma Ramayanam, Lord Siva himself explains the importance and efficacy of Rama Mantra to Goddess Parvathy for her illumination.

Saint Thyagaraja through many of his compositions conveys the message – the value of chanting Rama Nama. His devotion to Lord Rama is immeasurable. Ramamantra was within him – his very heart and soul in his every action, thought and breath. The following compositions are examples-

The Charana of the composition *Sujana Jeevana* in Khamas raga, Rupaka tala illustrates the power of Tarakanamam. The Pallavi of the composition describes Lord Rama as the life giver of all good people

“सुजन जीवन ! राम !
सुगुण भूषण ! राम !”

who is embellished with all good qualities.
In the Anupallavi

“भुजग भूषणार्चित बुधजनावनात्मजवन्दित !
श्रित चन्दन ! दशतुरंग ! मामव”

the Lord is described as one who is worshipped by Shiva and who is the protector of all scholars and worshipped by Brahma & who is the Kalpaka tree.

In the Charana:

“चारुनेत्र ! श्रीकळत्र ! श्रीरम्यगात्र
तारकनाम सुचरित्र दशरथपुत्र
तारकाधिपानन ! धर्मपालक ! तारय रघुवर !
निर्मल त्यागराजसव्रुत ! ”

Charunetra srikalatra: Oh! Lord having beautiful eyes and one having Lakshmi as his wife possessing charming features.

Tarakanama : One whose very name gives Mukthi (the very chanting of Rama Mantra gives Salvation)

Dasarathaputra: Oh! Son of Dasaratha

Tarakadhipanana Dharmapalaka: Your face is similar to the Moon (husband of Stars), who is the protector of Dharma.

Taraya Raghuvara: Oh! Raghuvara, Help me to cross the ocean of Life and Death.

Nirmala Thyagaraja Sannuta: You are pure hearted and worshipped by Thyagaraja.

The same idea is brought out in many compositions as well as in Divyanamavalis too. The value and significance of Taraka Mantra is delivered even in the simple Divyanamavali composition. The composition “ पाहि पाहि दीनबंधो!” consists of Pallavi & eight charanas in Sourashtra Raga , Rupaka Tala.

Pallavi: पाहि पाहि दीनबंधो माम् पाहि परानन्द सिन्धो!

Charana: तारकासुत वैरिनुत ! राम ! तारक शुभकर चरित !

This is full of epithets of Shri Rama. The qualities of an Uttama purusha are vividly described. The line 'Tarakasubhakaracharita' states 'whose very name and story is the remedy to give Moksha and emphasises the importance of Taraka Nama. There are 8 charanas for this composition and this is an Eka dhatu keerthana and the Charanas are sung in the same dhatu.

In another composition *Sarasanetraaparaguna* in Shankarabharana Raga , Adi Tala, Thyagaraja again states – 'Your name is Holy and chanting your name can wash away all Sins. In the Pallavi of this composition, Thyagaraja describes the Lord as having eyes like lotus petals, having boundless qualities and describes the Lord as the killer of the elephant 'Kuvalayapeetha' of Kamsa and also the lifter of Govardhana Mountain.

In the Charana:

'पापगणाभ्र ! समीरण ! पामर पालित ! पावन नामचण !
तापस मानस सारस सुभ्रम रानघ ! राघव ! मारमण !
योगि वन्द्य ! पाहि हे सागरार्त्तिहरण !
राग लोभदुर ! श्री त्यागराज पोषण !'

Thyagaraja describes the Lord as the wind which drives away the cloud of accumulated sins and also as the protector of the poor and illiterate. The line 'pavana nama chana' means – chanting Lord's name can drive away all sins as He is the black bee that hovers about in the lotus mind of Sages. In the coming Charanas, Thyagaraja portrays Lord Rama as invaluable (Anagha), born in the Raghu dynasty who is the loving husband of 'Ma' i.e. Lakshmi (Rama is an incarnation

of Vishnu. Lord who is worshipped by Sages who is the protector of the Ocean King Varuna and who is free from the chain of desires and miserliness). You are nourished by Thyagaraja. This composition is also full of epithets of Lord Rama.

In yet another composition 'रघुपते ! राम !' in Sahana Raga, Rupaka tala, the same idea can be seen. This composition also contains praises of Lord Rama.

The Pallavi :

रघुपते ! राम ! राक्षस भीम !

means Oh! Rama, the most virtuous of Raghu dynasty, a terror to the Rakshasa.

In the Anupallavi 'भृगुसुतमदहरण ! मुनिबृन्द वन्दितचरण !'

Here Lord Rama is praised as the destroyer of the pride of Parasurama, who is worshipped by assembly of Sages.

In the Charanas, various allusions are also incorporated. The lines 'Sugeya tarakanamadheya' means "Your Taraka nama is sung by devotees which conveys the meaning – Your name is a safe boat to cross the ocean of life and death (Gajendra Moksham)".

Thyagaraja considers Lord Rama as the embodiment of all incarnations of Lord Vishnu. All the good qualities of all Gods are incorporated in his concept of Lord Rama. To Thyagaraja, music was not only for enjoyment, but it was also a road to Moksha. Saint Thyagaraja gives the Mantra "Rama" for the salvation (Moksha) which is the ultimate goal of human life. The message of Taraka Mantra is inscribed in all the Kritis of Thyagaraja and that is the road he strode to attain the ultimate Bliss.

Dr. Bhuvanewari G. is Associate Professor & Head of the Department of Music, Maharaja's College, Ernakulam.

OBITUARY



Shri S. Venkiteswaran
Senior Advocate

Mr S. Venkiteswaran, Senior Advocate, who expired on 21st December 2013, had a distinguished practice for the last more than five decades. He was very well known all over the world as a senior shipping lawyer in India. The shipping industry knew him as India's foremost expert on maritime law.

He had advised the Government of India, from time to time, and had been associated with several committees constituted by the Government of India for drafting of legislations as also subordinate legislations.

In recognition of the services to the Indian shipping industry, the Government of India had conferred on him the *Varuna Award*, the highest civilian award in Shipping, in 2004.

Besides his large legal practice and busy professional life, he found time to take part in social and cultural activities. He was the Chairman of the *Shanmukha Priya Trust* of the Sri Subramania Samaj temple, solely devoted to social service in a peculiar way without any distinction of caste or community. He was the main architect of an old-age home, intended for lower middle class, at Neral, as the Vice Chairman of the *Sri Kamakshi Trust*. He was one of the Trustees of the Board of Trustees of the *Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha* for several years; was the President of the Bombay Music Academy for nearly a decade. He was President of the over 65 year old Bombay Keraleeya Samaj, which conducts free Ayurvedic dispensary in the City of Mumbai. He was also the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Bombay Tamil Sangham, which has been doing yeomen service to the community.

Influence of Lalita Sahasra Nama in Syama Sastri Kritis

Dr. Veenalakshmi V.



Shri Syama Sastri

India's glorious cultural heritage since the time of the Puranas is closely related to the Bhakti cult. Through the contributions of Acharyas like Shri Sankaracharya, Ramanuja, Nimbarka and Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa etc, the essence of spirituality spread all over India.

Shri Sankaracharya introduced 'shammatas'. Shakti cult is one among them.

- | | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| 1 Saivas | - | worshippers of Siva |
| 2 Vaishnavas | - | worshippers of Vishnu. |
| 3 Saktas | - | worshippers of Mother Goddess in various forms. |
| 4 Ganapatyas | - | worshippers of Ganapaty |
| 5 Sauryas | - | worshippers of Sun |
| 6 Kaumaras | - | worshippers of Subrahmanya. |

Though men chose different deities for their worship in different times, only three of them ie Saiva, Vaishnava and Sakta became popular.

Devi Cult

Different forms of Devi are :-

- | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------------|
| Saraswati | : | Goddess of learning |
| Lakshmi | : | Goddess of wealth |
| Kali or Durga | : | Goddess of courage. |

The Goddess Lakshmi again can be classified as Ashta lakshmi.

Concept of Mother Goddess

The most prevalent aspect of the concept of Goddess in Indian culture is the Mother Goddess concept. Mother - child relationship is a delicate one. Indeed a child is in want of the care and concern of his/her mother. Many studies reveal and most of the scholars believe that the worship of the Goddess can be traced back to the age-old Indus valley civilization.

As **Lalita Sahasranama** is adored by any Devi bhakta, it is not surprising that Syama Sastri has adopted synonyms of Devi in many of his kritis from Lalitha Sahasranama and some ideas are reflected through different words in his compositions.

Syama Sastri, a staunch devotee of Devi, born in the family of Devi worshippers of Kancheepuram was a great devotee himself. He wrote all the songs he sang in praise of Goddess Kamakshi, the presiding deity of the temple in Kanchi. The letters 'ka' and 'ma' represent Saraswati and Lakshmi respectively. It means that the eyes of Devi Kamakshi are considered as Saraswati and Lakshmi.

- | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---------|---|-------|
| Ka | - | ma | - | akshi |
| Saraswati | - | Lakshmi | - | eyes |

Through his various compositions he raised the worship to an intimate personal one. Here one can see the influence of Lalita Sahasranama- which includes both external pooja and intimate internal communion, **Bahir mukha and antar mukha**.

'Antarmukha samaaradhyaa bahirmukha sudurlabha '-----stotra 162. Goddess Kamakshi was to him a real living person.

Synonyms of Mother Goddess are found in abundance in the compositions of Syama Sastri. The Bhairavi gitam *Parvaty* is the composition which contains the largest number of synonyms of Devi from Lalita Sahasranama. There are 17 mantras. They are :- Kamakshi Amba, Parama Pavani, Bhavani, Parashakti, Gauri, Bhairavi, Shambhavi, Narayani, Rajarajeswari, Tejomayi, Ojovati, Omkari, Pavani, Parvaty, Shri Lalita, Sankari etc.

One of the famous kritis of Syama Sastri in Madhyamavati is *Palimchu Kamakshi*. Its pallavi is "palimchu kamakshi paavani papasamani"— here Kamakshi and Pavani are from Lalita Sahasranama. The word **kamakshi** – one of the significant words in Lalita Sahasranama has been used repeatedly and differently in various kritis of Syama Sastri. The word Kamakshi which manifests in every breath of Syama Sastri is the most recurring one in his kritis and means 'lovely eyed'.

The 'Brahmanda Purana' says that Devi is omniscient and fulfills all the desires by being the witness of all actions of the living beings. In the kriti *Ninne nammi naanu* in Todi raga, Syama Sastri addresses Kamakshi as '**kamitartha phaladayaki**'. Here Kamakshi is the Devi who fulfills all the desires of the devotee. 'Kamakshi kamadayini' -23rd stotra from Lalita Sahasranama emphasizes the same meaning.

In the Punnagavarali kriti *Kanakasaila viharini*, he praised Devi as the sole witness of the whole world. 'Kamakshi sakala lokasakshi'. Naturally the words akshi and sakshi have logical connection.

In the kriti *Puraharajaaye* in Gaulipantu raga Kamakshi is again praised as '**kamadi phalade**' as one who bestows highest result. In Indian spiritual scenario 'athiphala' is nothing but moksha or liberation. In another kriti *Tarunamidamma* in the same raga Devi is considered as the ocean of kindness. Eg:- 'Kamakshi karuna nidhi and Kamakshi kataakshi'

'Kadamba vanavasini' is the 23rd stotra in the Lalitha Sahasranama. In the kriti *Brovassamayamide* in Punnagavarali, Syama Sastri describes Devi as Shri Lalita – 'Kadambavanapriya Shri Lalita'. In the same kriti he praised Devi as 'Tumburu naradanuta sangitarata'-worshipped by Tumburu and Narada, one who delights in music. Tumburu and Narada are considered as divine musicians who help mortals in mastering music and fine arts. The name 'ganalolupa' (160th stotra) from Lalita Sahasranama conveys the same idea.

In the kriti *Nannubrovu Lalita* in Lalita raga the composer asks Devi to come quickly and grant protection. His mixed feelings and ardent devotion to Kamakshi are conveyed through the lines-'Ni athivegame vachi, Ninuvina evarunnaru gati janani'-----'Oh mother protect me expeditiously. There is none but you to whom I resort.'

'**Parashakti**', 116th stotra is another nama seen in Lalitha Sahasranama which is also significant like Kamakshi. This is the supreme energy from which the whole universe takes its birth, sustenance, and final dissolution. Eg:- *Emani migula varinthu* in Todi raga.

From first charana :- "Saramati nanu dayato ganchi karuninchumu talli neranammiti
Chala maha leela galigina sakti santatamu nive santoshavati".

Meaning:-'Oh Saramati, the essence of great intellect! Please grace with your kind glance and shower your mercy on me. I have placed my complete faith in you. You are the ultimate form of energy behind all the divine sport on earth. You are ever established in bliss.'

From third charana:- "Pancha nada kaveri teeramuna nivasinche uma
Panchapakesa muninuta haimavati parasakti"

In the kriti *Sankari Sankuru* in the raga Saveri the composer appeals to Devi as she is the only one who eradicates all difficulties and vanquishes all enemies. She is the auspicious one, Kalyani, who is benevolent to all devotees. Eg:- "Sankata harini ripuvidarini kalyani".....anupallavi. This popular kriti is full of addresses like Sankari, Akhilandeswari, Shambhavi, Gauri, Kalyani, Jagatjanani, Bhavani, Sulini, Mardani, Samaganalole, Bale etc which are found in Lalita Sahasranama. This is not a mere coincidence that Syama Sastri used these names effectively imbibing the very significance of these words to enrich the emotion in his songs.

In Devi worship, 'Tripurasundari' and 'Mahatripurāsundari' are the highest forms especially in 'Shri chakra navavarana puja'. Syama Sastri uses the word Mahatripurāsundari and Tripurasundari so emotionally in various kritis as the terms have a mystic and philosophical significance in Sakta cult. In the kriti *Kanakasailaviharini* in Punnagavarali raga we can see the doxologies from Lalita Sahasranama. Eg:- Bale, Himagirija, Lalita, Mahatripurāsundari , Sivasankari, Tripuravasini, Siva, Syamalamba, Janani, Kamakshi sakala loka sakshi, Bhuvanewari.

Some other examples :- Eg: 1) 'Sankari vanithe sati maha tripurasundari' from *Kanakasailaviharini*, Punnagavarali raga 2) 'Bhuvanewari Shambhavi Mahatripurāsundari' from *Shri Pathimukha Virachitha Pujye*, Saveri raga.

The word '**Rajarajeswari**' is the 134th stotra in the Lalita Sahasranama. Syama Sastri in his Bhairavi gita, *Parvati janani*. He uses the word Rajarajeswari with three different ideas. In the first occasion Rajarajeswari is the force that nourishes all the worlds - 'Rajarajeswari sarvalokapalike' In the second occasion Rajarajeswari is described as the form of the mystic syllable 'hrim'- 'Shri Rajarajeswari hrimkararupini'. Here the composer brings out the significance of the word through mantra sastra. In the third occasion Rajarajeswari is identified as Purani or the ancient one or from which 1st principle, the world is born. - 'Purani Shri Rajarajeswari'

In the Nattai kriti *Pahimam Shri Rajarajeswari*, Syama Sastri addresses Devi Rajarajeswari' as 'Shri Chakra Rajarajeswari' as Devi is the presiding deity of 'Shri Chakra'.

One of the rare ragas which is used by Syama Sastri is 'Chintamani'. The raga name itself is from Lalita Sahasranama. - 'Chintamani ghrantastha pancha brahmaasanasthita' -----22nd stotra.

As a devotee and archaka of Bangaru Kamakshi of Kancheepuram , Lalita Sahasranama influenced him to a great extent. Among the navavidhabhakti, Sastri's form of bhakti is atma nivedanam. He wants oneness with the Mother Goddess.

'Na taato na maata na bandhur na daata
Na putro na putri na bhrutyo na bharta
Na jaaya na vidya na vrittir mamaiva
Gatistwam gatistwam tvaameka bhavani.
(Bhavanyashtakam, Sri Sankaracharya).

Meaning is :-Neither the Father, nor the Mother; Neither the Relation and Friend, nor the Donor, Neither the Son, nor the Daughter; Neither the Servant, nor the Husband, Neither the Wife, nor the (worldly) Knowledge; Neither my Profession, You are my Refuge, You Alone are my Refuge, Oh Mother Bhavani.

This sloka shows the greatness of Devi worship. Therefore, these kritis which abound in praise of Devi (Goddess) are indeed great. Sung with belief or not, rendition of these kritis will undoubtedly shower blessings on the singer or the upasaka.

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Dr. M. A. Bhageerathi

திவ்வியப் பிரபந்தம் என்பது தெய்வத்தைப் பற்றி பாடப்பட்ட பாடல் வகைகள் ஆகும். பன்னிரு ஆழ்வார்கள் இனிய தமிழ் மொழியில் பல்வேறு செய்யுள்களை இறைவனுக்கு சூட்டப்படும் மாலைகளில் உள்ள மணம் மிகுந்து மலர்களாக அளித்துள்ளனர். இறைவனுக்கு இசைபட இயற்றிய இச்செய்யுள் வகைகளில் இசைக் குறிப்புகள் பல உள்ளன. அவற்றுள்ளும் பல்வேறு இசைக் கருவிகளைப் பற்றிய செய்திகள் நமக்கு கிடைக்கின்றன. அவற்றில் சிலவற்றை இங்கு பார்ப்போம்.

தொண்டரடி பொடியாழ்வார் யாழ், குழல், தண்ணுமை, முழுவம் போன்ற கருவிகளை தமது திருப்பள்ளியெழுச்சி பாசுரத்தில் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளார். பாசுரத்தின் அப்பகுதி பின்வருமாறு:

“ஏதமில் தண்ணுமை ஏக்கம் மத்தளி
யாழ்குழல் முழுவமோ டிசைதிசை கெழுமிக்
கீதங்கள் பாடினர்”

திருமங்கையாழ்வார் தமது திருநெடுந்தாண்டகச் செய்யுளில் நரம்புக்கருவியான வீணையைக் குறிப்பிடுகின்றார். அப்பாடல் பின்வருமாறு:

“சொல்லாய்ந்த நெடுவீணை முலைமேல் தாங்கித்
தாமுறாவல் நகையினயே தோன்றருக்கு
மெல்விரல்கள் சிவப்பெய்றுதத் தடவி யாங்கே
மென்கிளிபோல் மிகமீழ்நறும் என்பதையே”

இப்பாடலில் வீணையை மீட்டும் முறை மிகச் சிறப்பாக கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது.

“மெல்விரல்கள் சிவப்பெய்றுத் தடவி”

என்ற சொற்களால் வீணை விரல்களால் இசைக்கப்படும் கருவி என்று உணர்த்துகிறார். மேலும் தொடர்ந்து இசைப்பதால் வெளிப்படும் இசையில் மெருகு ஏறும். விரல்களும் சிவந்துவிடும். இதனையும் திருமங்கையாழ்வார் குறிப்பிடுகிறார்.

நம்மாழ்வார் இறைவனை குறிப்பிடும் பொழுது
“முன்றல் யாழ்பயில்நூல் நரம்பின் முதிர்சுவையே”

இறைவனையே இசைவடிவாக கூறுவது இங்கு நோக்கத்தக்கது. மேலும் விளக்கமாக பார்ப்போம் ஆனால் நன்கு யாழ் பயின்ற ஒருவர் அதன் நரம்பை மீட்டும்போது பயிற்சியின் முதிர்ச்சியால் இசை சுவைபட வெளிப்படுகிறது. அச்சுவையே இறைவன் என்று கூறுகிறார். இசை மும்மணிகளான தியாகராஜர், முத்துஸ்வாமி தீக்ஷிதர், சியாமா சாஸ்திரி போன்றோரும் இறைவனை “நாத ப்ரம்மம்” என்று குறிப்பிடுகின்றனர். எனவே அவர்களும் நம்மாழ்வாரைப் போன்றே இறைவனை இசைவடிவாக கொண்டனர் எனக் கொள்ளலாம்.

நம்மாழ்வார் மேலும் பல இடங்களில் இறைவன் “இசை வடிவானவன் என்று குறிப்பிடுகின்றார். அக்குறிப்புகள் பின்வருமாறு:

“யாழின் இசையே ! அமுதே ! அறிவின்
பயனே ! அரியேறே”

இதில் இறைவனை ஏழிசையாகக் குறிப்பிடுகின்றார், ஏழிசை என்பது குரல், துத்தம், கைக்கிளை, உழை, இளி, விளி, தாரம் ஆகிய ஏழு ஸ்வரங்களைக் குறிக்கும்.

திருமங்கையாழ்வாரும் திருநாங்கூரில் உள்ள இறைவனைப் பற்றி பாடும் பொழுது “ஏழிசை”

என்ற சொல்லை குறிப்பிடுகின்றார். பாசுரத்தின் அப்பகுதி பின்வருமாறு.

“ஓறப்பெதில் காலம் கழிவும் ஆனானை
ஏழிசை யின்சுவை தன்னை”

மேலும் திருமங்கையாழ்வார் “கடுவாய்” என்ற இசைக் கருவியினை குறிப்பிடுகின்றார். “கடுவாய்” என்பது கடலின் ஓசையை ஒத்த இசையை எழுப்பக்கூடிய பறை வகையை சார்ந்தது அதனை பல்லவ மன்னன் பயன்படுத்தினான் என்று திருமங்கையாழ்வார் குறிப்பிடுகிறார். பாசரத்தின் அப்பகுதி பின்வருமாறு.

“கடல் போல் முழங்கும் சூல் குடுவாய்ப்
பறையுடைப் பல்லவர்கோன்”

திருப்பல்லாண்டில் போர் நடக்கும் சமயத்தில் பாஞ்ச சன்னியம் முழங்குவது குறிப்பிடப்பட்டுள்ளது. அப்பகுதி பின்வருமாறு:

“படை போர்புக்கு முழங்கும்அப் பாஞ்ச
சன்னியமும் பல்லாண்டே”

கண்ணன் திரு அவதாரச் சிறப்பை கூறுங்கால் பல்லியமானது, “பல்பறை” என்று குறிப்பிடப்பட்டுள்ளது. அப்பகுதி பின்வருமாறு:

“பாடுவார்களும் பல்பறை கொட்டநீன்று
ஆடுவார்களும் ஆயிற்றாய்ப் பாடியே”

சதங்கை ஓலி பற்றிய குறிப்பினை நாம் பெரியாழ்வாரின் திருப்பாதாதி கேச வண்ணத்தில் காணலாம். அப்பகுதி பின்வருமாறு:

“அழகிய பைம் பொன்னின் கோல் அங்கைக் கொண்டு கழல்கள் சதங்கை
கலந்தெங்கம் ஆர்ப்ப”

இறைவன் தனது சிறிய காலை வைத்து நடக்கும் பொழுது அவன் அணிந்துள்ள அணிகலன்களில் இருந்து ஏற்படும் இசைந்த ஓசையை நாம் ‘பொன்னியர் கிண்கிணி’ என்ற பகுதியில் காணலாம். பாசரத்தின் அப்பகுதி பின்வருமாறு:

“பொன்னியல் கிண்கிணி சுட்டி புறம்கட்டி
தன்னியல் ஓசை சலன்சலன் என்றிட”

ஆண்டாள் தனது செய்யுட்களில் திருப்பாவையில் இறைவனை மண்ப்பதாகக் கனவ காண்கிறாள். அப்பொழுது இசைக்கருவிகளை அவர் குறிப்பிடுகிறார். அச்செய்யுள் பின்வருமாறு:

“மத்தளம் கொட்ட வரிசங்கம் மின்ன”

மேலும் “போல் வன சங்கங்கள்” என்று “மாலே மணிவண்ணா” என்று தொடங்கும் பாடலில் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளார்.

திருமழிசை பிரான் தமது திருச்சந்த விருத்தத்தில்

“சங்கு தங்கு முன்னை நங்கை
கொங்கை தங்கலுற்றவன்”

என்று சங்கீதத்தைக் குறிப்பிடுகின்றார்.

திருவண்புருடோத்தமத்தில் “முழவு” குறிப்பிடப்பட்டுள்ளது. அப்பகுதி பின்வருமாறு:

கொண்டல் ஆர்முடிவின் குளிர் வார்பொழில்

குலமயில் நடமாட

வண்டுதான் இசை பாடிடு நாங்கூர்

வண்புரு டோத்தமமே.

திருவாய்மொழியில் நம்மாழ்வார், புல்லாங்குழலை இறைவன் இசைப்பதனைக் குறிப்பிட்டு “குழல்” இசைப்பதால் இறைவன் “மாயவன்” என்று பெயர் பெற்றான் என்று குறிப்பிடுகின்றார். அச்சுவைமிக்க செய்யுட்பகுதி பின்வருமாறு:

கூத்தர் குடமெடுத்தாடில்

“கோவிந்தனாம் எனா ஓடும்

வாய்த்த குழலோசை கேட்கில்

“மாயவன்” என்றுமையாக்கும்

தெய்வீக இசையால் மனிதரும், ஆந்தையும் மயங்குவதால் இறைவன் “மாயவனே”.

திருவாய் மொழியில் நம்மாழ்வார், குழலை எவ்வாறு கண்ணன் இசைக்கிறார் என்று கூறுகிறார். அத்திருமொழி பின்வருமாறு :

புதுமணம் முகந்து கொண்டறிவு மாலோ !
பொங்கிள வாடைபுன் செக்கராலே !
அதுமணந் தகன்றநங் கண்ணன் கள்வம்
கண்ணனிற் கொடிது; இனி அதனில் உம்பர்
மது மண மல்லிகை மந்தக் கோவை
வண்பசுந் சாந்தினில் - பஞ்ச மம்வைத்து
அது மணந் தின்னருள் ஆய்ச்சியர்க்கே
ஊதும் அத்தீங்குடிற் கேயுய்யேன்நான் !

நம்மாழ்வார் தமது திருவாய் மொழியில் இசைக்கருவிகள் பல முழங்குவதை

“சூழ்விசம் பணிமுகில் தூரியம் முழக்கின” என்று குறிப்பிடுகின்றார்.

மேலும் அவர் இறைவனின் இருப்பிட வாயிலில் முரசங்கள் முழங்குவதை.

“அதீரூரல் முரசங்கள் அலைகடல் முழக்கொத்த”

என்று குறிப்பிடுகின்றார். மற்றுமொரு திருவாய்மொழிப் பாசுரத்தில் அவர் சங்கங்கள் இசைக்கப்படுவதைப் பின்வருமாறு குறிப்பிடுகின்றார்.

“காலிங்கள் வலம்புரி கலஸ்தெங்கம் இசைத்தனர்”

பூதத்தாழ்வார் தமது மூன்றாம் திருவந்தாதியில் “சிலம்பு” என்ற இசைக்கருவியைப் பின்வருமாறு குறிப்பிடுகின்றனர்.

“சிலம்பும் செறிகழலும் சென்றிசைப்ப...”

திருமங்கை ஆழ்வார் தமது பெரிய திருமடலில் குழலினைப் பற்றிய குறிப்பை வழங்கி உள்ளார். அது பின்வருமாறு :-

“ஆயன் வேய் இன்னிசை ஓசைக் கிரங்காதார்...” திருமங்கை ஆழ்வார் “பறை” என்ற இசைக் கருவியை “மன்னு பறை கறங்க” என்று குறிப்பிடுகின்றார்.

திகட்டா அமுதமான திவ்வியப் ப்ரபந்தத்தில் எண்ணற்ற இசைக்குறிப்புகள் காணப்படுகின்றன. அவற்றில் இசைக்கருவிகளைப் பற்றிய குறிப்புகளை மட்டும் இவ்வாய்விற்கு எடுத்தாண்டுள்ளேன். சங்கம் இறைவனோடு சங்கமித்த ஓர் இசைக்கருவி. திவ்வியப் ப்ரபந்தத்தில் பெரும்பாலான பாடல்களில் சங்கம் இடம் பெற்றுள்ளது. யாழ், வீணை போன்ற கருவிகளும் குறிப்பிடப்பட்டுள்ளது.

மேலும் கண்ணனோடு “குழல்” எப்போதும் இருப்பதால் அதனைப் பற்றி பல குறிப்புகளும் கிடைக்கின்றன என்று ஆழ்வார்கள் குறிப்பிடுகின்றனர். இத்தகைய சிறப்புடைத்த திவ்வியப் ப்ரபந்தத்தில் இசைக்கருவிகளைப்பற்றிய எனது ஆய்வு, எம்பெருமான் பள்ளிகொண்ட பாற்கடலில் ஒருதுளியே எனக் கூறுவதில் மகிழ்வும் மனநிறைவும் அடைகிறேன்.

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Vasundhra Rajagopal



Shri T.R. Subramanyam

It was the summer of 1991. The place was Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. My husband and I along with our two younger daughters reached the Balaji Temple and were thrilled to see a concert about to commence. What a lovely surprise we got when we went to the concert hall and saw Prof. T R Subramanyam (TRS Sir) on the stage getting ready to start singing. We sat through a mesmerizing concert and then went to meet him. I had known TRS Sir since my college days at Delhi, where I went to University and also learnt Carnatic music from Gana Ratna Shri. N. Gopala Iyer, a very close friend of TRS Sir.

The meeting in Pittsburg was a life changer for us. Sir was teaching that summer at Pittsburg. He asked my daughter Nisha to sing and after listening to her, asked us to bring her to him for lessons from Toronto where we were living. A six hour commute each way, every weekend, for over two months and after many hours of lessons from Sir, Nisha became totally addicted to Carnatic music. When Sir was leaving for Delhi at the end of that summer, he said to me "Why don't you come to Chennai to attend the Music Season this year?" After a hastily planned trip to Chennai and our first experience of the Chennai Music Season, both Nisha and I were hooked. Before we left for Toronto Sir said, "If you are serious about music for yourself and Nisha, you should be in India". That created in my mind, an almost undeniable urge to move back to India to pursue music. After a lot of soul searching my husband and I decided to do exactly that. I can say in all honesty that Sir was the main reason we moved to India.

While Sir triggered one of the most important life changing events in Nisha's and my life, he influenced us in many more ways, far beyond music. Both Nisha and I started learning from Sir after our return to Delhi in 1992 (my guru Shri.Gopala Iyer had passed away by then).

A born teacher, Sir taught in a way that was thoroughly enjoyable. He would talk about the grammar of music in such an interesting manner that we would not even realize he was talking about the theory of music. Be it the teaching of an alapana, kriti, neraval, kalpana swara singing or a pallavi there was never a dull moment. His classes were replete with many interesting and amusing anecdotes about his own and other vidwans' concerts and the lessons would be so spell binding that we lost track of time. We would commence class around 9 am and not realize how long we were with him till mami would ask him to come for lunch at around 1.30pm. His favorite phrase to the students was to "sing with abandon". There was a lot of camaraderie between Sir and his students. We were always free to discuss/question any aspect of music with him. "Stretch the boundaries" was another favorite refrain we used to hear.

While teaching a song Sir would always ensure that we enunciated the lyrics correctly. A stickler for correct pronunciation, whatever the language of the song, he would explain the meaning of the lyrics and teach us to split the phrases correctly while singing. His mastery over the South Indian languages as well as English was known to all. According to him, the lyrics for elaborating the neraval were to be chosen carefully, maintaining the completeness of the sentiment expressed by the composer.

His forte was of course, Ragam, Tanam, Pallavi. Sir always maintained that pallavis should be sung without tears or fear. The creativity that he used in the composing of pallavis was astounding and many of his pallavis are sung by senior musicians today. His pallavis were so captivating that many a time, he would get requests for certain pallavis during his concerts. Students who learnt pallavis from Sir always came back with a deeper appreciation for every aspect of pallavi singing.

His other compositions, particularly varnams are equally beautiful, wherein he incorporated swaraksharams as well as highly creative patterns of swarams and poruthams. His command of languages, mastery of music and manner of presentation made his concerts, workshops and lecture demonstrations highly sought after by students and rasikas alike.

Many a great musician had influenced Sir. He was an ardent admirer of Shri G.N. Balasubramaniam. During class he would tell the students how GNB Sir would sing a particular phrase or a raga. His deep appreciation for relatively unheard compositions would make him arrange many workshops where rare compositions of various Vaggeyakaras would be taught by stalwarts. Through his Music Education Trust he would arrange programs highlighting the compositions of these Vaggeyakaras and also give concert opportunities for his students, other upcoming as well as well established artists.

His generosity in every aspect of life was legendary. Anyone who asked for any help got it. Once, in Toronto, when he had come for a concert, I had told him that I was shortly to sing a concert exclusively of Purandara Dasar compositions. He asked me whether I knew enough songs for a full concert and I had to tell him that I did not. After his concert that night, a number of rasikas came to our house to spend time with Sir and it was close to midnight before they left. Sir was to catch an early morning flight the next day and I told him to get some rest as he had to get up early. He immediately asked me "Don't you want to learn Dasar compositions?" I told him it was late, but he told me to get a recorder and sat down to sing about 10 Dasar compositions.

Sir was a rasika nonpareil. After his move to Chennai, every evening would find him at some Sabha or the other attending a concert. His trademark yellow Nano was immediately recognizable at any concert venue in Chennai. Be it a youngster, amateur or a seasoned performer, he would sit in the front row and his "bale" and "sabash" would ring out in the auditorium. To his students he would constantly say that there was something to be learnt in every concert and would ask us to listen to everyone with an open mind. Another favourite phrase of his was that he would always be a student of music.

Even tempered, ever cheerful and never one to hold a grudge, he taught us many valuable lessons of life. This positive attitude to life was something that we all wanted to emulate. He enjoyed everything he did, from teaching to singing to meeting people. He could get lost in the beauty of a Kambhoji or a Kalyani alapana, and the next moment derive equal pleasure from eating a tasty baadam halwa or mysore pak. It would be fair to say that he personified living life to the fullest and on his own terms. Looking back, I now realize how much we imbibed from him; not just music, but how to live each day full of music, joy and happiness.

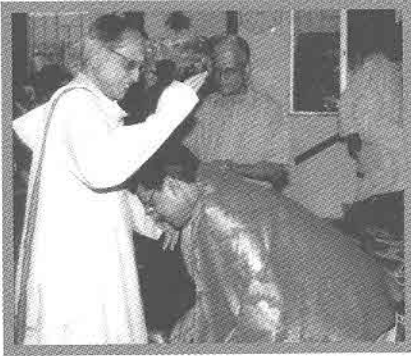
Thank you TRS Sir!

Vasundhra Rajagopal, a student of Shri T.R. Subramanyam is a Carnatic musician living in Chennai.

SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI GRANT

We are grateful to the Sangeet Natak Akademi for the financial grant for Shanmukha for the year 2013-2014.

Mohan Santhanam



Shri T.R. Subramanyam with
Mohan Santhanam

Perhaps one of the most striking examples in the entire annals of Carnatic music is the way, while still a teenager, he allowed himself to be tested on his Pallavi skills by the panel of judges and thereupon unquestionably bagging the first prize. The event that has now become historic consisted of T.R.Subramanyam (TRS) composing a line that he submitted as his entry to the contest. The judges consisted of luminaries none other than the then acknowledged Pallavi maestro Mudicondan Venkatarama Iyer and the Alathur Brothers.

“What is this Mani?” The judges are said to have questioned. “This is just one line. In what ragam are you going to sing this pallavi?”

“Well, you can select any ragam that you wish and tell me,” TRS replied with his characteristic confidence. “I will sing it in whatever ragam you ask me to”.

“Have you prepared the talam of the pallavi?”

“No. You can tell me the talam that you want and I will fit the words of the pallavi accordingly and sing!”

“Oh! What about the 'nadai'?”

“You can choose the 'nadai' as well – I will sing it in whatever 'nadai' that you ask me to!”

In the end he was asked to sing the Pallavi in Mukhari ragam, in Sankirna Chapu talam and in Sankirna Nadai. Needless to say on being given these instructions, he executed the Pallavi on the spot obviously without any prior preparation and sang with élan, surprising the judges beyond measure with his sheer brilliance and supreme confidence. His winning the first prize was naturally a given.

His interest and enthusiasm for Pallavis continued unabated throughout his life. Perhaps it was the sheer challenge of mathematics combined with the aesthetic that drew him to Pallavis and for them to occupy a special place in his heart. His stock of Pallavis was nothing short of remarkable and he consistently had the ability to keep churning out Pallavi after Pallavi like an inexhaustible geyser.

Some thoughts from his team members:

Two recent remarks made in conversation by renowned vidwans:

“I remember a pallavi he sang when I played for him in a concert at the Thirunakkara Temple, Kottayam,” recalls mridangam ace Thiruvaarur Bhaktavatsalam. “It was a pallavi in Adi Tala but set to Sankirna Nadai. M. Chandrasekharan was on the violin. TRS sang as if he had practised and sung the pallavi all his life – such was his supreme comfort level and the ease with which he executed the pallavi.”

The maestro continues, “Also, the fact that the tri-kaalam of a Pallavi could also be executed from the 'arudhi' instead of the conventional and compulsory 'idam', is something that I first

experienced only with TRS. This was a revelation to me at that point – I must have been about 24 or 25 years old then!"

"Sir, do you remember a concert in the year 1992 at the A.P.Bhavan in New Delhi?" I asked the maestro V.V.Subramanian when I met him at a private function recently.

"Shankarabharanam ragam and the pallavi was in Tisra gati," was the immediate and prompt reply! "How will I ever forget this concert!"

Such was the impact TRS had on his peers and his accompanying team.

And here I feel compelled to add an unforgettable experience:

The year was December 1989. Some of us students had requested him to sing a pallavi in the raga Natakurinji. He had immediately agreed to do so. However in the subsequent concerts that took place that December Season, no pallavi in Natakurinji was sung. Finally, he was reminded of this in the car on the way to his concert in Sri Krishna Gana Sabha.

"Oh, I completely forgot! Let me see... why don't I try something new..."

In a matter of minutes, he modified a pallavi that the legendary G.N.B. had sung in Raga Kalyani, set it to Adi Tala Khanda Gati and it was clear that he was ready with the pallavi by the time we alighted at the Sabha premises.

As TRS tuned the tambura and handed it over to me in the greenroom, he just casually mentioned the pallavi to Guruvayur Dorai who was to accompany him on the mridangam. As far as I know, G. Harishankar didn't get to hear the pallavi at all except when TRS finally sang it on stage. T. Rukmini on the violin, I remember, had just arrived straight from the train from Mysore to the concert without even going home.

The result however was something else – an exceptionally executed RTP in Natakurinji and the pallavi really seemed as if it had been rehearsed by the team. I remember being completely bowled over by the sheer teamwork, the exceptional mutual understanding and most of all, the joyful camaraderie the four artists shared on stage.

Inspiration

TRS always used to say that it was the sheer genius and brilliance of G.N.Balasubramanian that actually drew him to Carnatic music and made him seriously pursue it.

"Once I came to know that GNB was performing around the precincts of Tirunelveli, I would always make it a point to go for his concerts. Even if he performed in neighbouring towns like Kalladaikurichi, I never thought twice about walking all the way there for the concert and walking back, in those days!"

He was one of the first musicians to extensively employ mathematics in swara singing and that he was a master of 'poruttams' is well-known. He attributed this to the inspiration he received both from maestros M.Balamuralikrishna and Lalgudi Jayaraman.

"Both these virtuosos' interpretations and approaches used to be very different and would appear to me very refreshing indeed," he often used to remark.

Language and Niraval

His comfort with the languages of Carnatic music particularly Telugu was so complete that he took a diametrically opposite stance against some well-established conventions back then. He was a stern critic of singing niraval in the line 'vaanimatalaku kopakincikanti' for the Tyagaraja kriti

Maajanaki (Kamboji). Ditto with the line 'kaaryamu telusunu tyagarajuniki' in the Dhanyasi kriti *Sangeetagnanam*. He conceded niraval being sung, albeit rather unwillingly for the "conventional" lines "veda sastra tatvaarthamu telisi" in *Endukupeddala* and for 'vaasavaadi sakala deva...' in *Shri Subramanyaaya Namaste*.

"These aren't the best of lines certainly," he would say. "But at least these aren't as atrocious as singing niraval for 'vaani maata...' and 'kaaryamu telisi'..!"

Another line he strongly negated singing niraval was 'Paramaanandamane...' – the Anupallavi line for the popular *Swara Raga Sudharasa*.

He however encouraged niraval in rather different places in certain other kritis and often sang them himself. One striking example is Tyagaraja's kriti in Pantuvarali *Vaadera daivamu manasa*, where TRS fused the last line of the charanam 'sita patiyani peru kaligina' with the pallavi line 'vadera daivamu manasa', thus making the meaning complete for niraval.

A different example where he chose an offbeat line for niraval is the line 'tyagaraja bhagya dayaki' in the kriti *Mahitapravruddha* – Tyagaraja's Lalgudi Pancharatna kriti.

Lifetime of Teaching

As a Guru, it really seemed that TRS had taken birth in this milieu to impart knowledge in his inimitable way. He was such a born teacher and instructor – the whole process of teaching came so naturally to him and he revelled in teaching concepts, phrases, meanings of songs, alapanas – practically each and every possible nuance of Carnatic music. His wonderfully patient nature stood him in good stead and I recall a time when a middle-aged gentleman approached TRS in sheer enthusiasm to learn, in the mid-1980s. This gentleman's grasping abilities were not of the highest order and TRS in his position could have easily refused to take him on as a student.

But TRS accepted to teach and the class commenced with Muthuswami Dikshitar's Isamanohari kriti *Sri Ganatham*. Getting the music of the syllables 'Sri', 'Ga', 'Na' and 'Naa' was itself a tall order. The student in his enthusiasm would sing the fifth syllable as well which was 'tam'.

"'Tam' vendaam," TRS would say and ask him to repeat the first four syllables again.

The whole process of just getting these four syllables right, took almost an hour and when I think back to the class now, nowhere did TRS display the slightest impatience or even a speck of displeasure.

After this first class was over, I did not get to see this gentleman immediately for some time. It was almost after a couple of months, when we met again at TRS' residence. My class being over, I just waited to see what was being taught. To my enormous surprise the gentleman sang Muthuswami Dikshitar's Hindolam kriti *Saraswati Vidhiyuvati* almost like a performing artist. The student had come a long way and without doubt everything was owed to the unswerving patience and faith of the born-Guru.

Guru Guha Choir and Organizational Abilities

The passion for teaching ensured that the students were exposed to the best of compositions and to rare ones as well. TRS' brainchild was a creation of a choir that was aptly christened "Guru Guha". Through this choir several compositions were propagated, especially the Divyanama Kirtanams of Tyagaraja in particular. One of the most impactful items featured by this choir under TRS' supervision was the singing of Muthuswami Dikshitar's matchless Chaturdasha Ragamalika *Sri Viswanatham Bhajeham*. The pallavi being sung in unison by all the members of the choir, each charanam was sung by two members in turn. Needless to say, the item made a wonderfully lasting impact.

Other notable features that were exhibited through the Guru Guha choir were several Purandara Dasar devarnamas that were tuned by TRS himself; Musical Trinity-based programs and Tiruppugazhs set in the Chanda talams. These were featured in several sabhas and also on Doordarshan. There was even a quiz on Carnatic music conducted by him on All India Radio in Delhi. The unique feature of this quiz was that it was conducted completely in Hindi!

With its complete monopoly over television, Doordarshan was much sought after those days and getting engagements with Doordarshan was no mean task. Yet TRS through his sheer scholarship, rectitude, goodwill and humour, always managed to have the Delhi Doordarshan accept his suggestions. The most heartwarming aspect was that TRS would ensure Doordarshan would have an engagement for practically all visiting artists from Chennai and otherwise. He saw to it that no visiting artist came all the way to Delhi for "just-one-concert". If an engagement with Doordarshan was not possible, then an extra couple of concert opportunities would be arranged along with perhaps an All India Radio recording. Artists overall would return to their base from Delhi with satisfaction – such was his benevolence and the sheer intention to assist the Carnatic music fraternity.

For the 50th year of Indian Independence TRS organized a unique event. He chose compositions with a patriotic theme in seven Indian languages, tuned it and presented this through an orchestra that consisted of singers, instrumentalists and percussionists from all parts of the country. Naturally, this involved much coordination, ensuring the stay for the artists from other parts of the country, the numerous rehearsal sessions and so on. But TRS, given his extraordinary flair for organization ensured that everything went off without any hitch whatsoever. The chief guests for this mega event were the then Lt. Governor of Delhi, the Chief Minister and luminaries like sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan. The event was such a resounding success that it was repeated the following year in the Delhi Tamizh Sangam.

Notations? No! Recording? Double no!

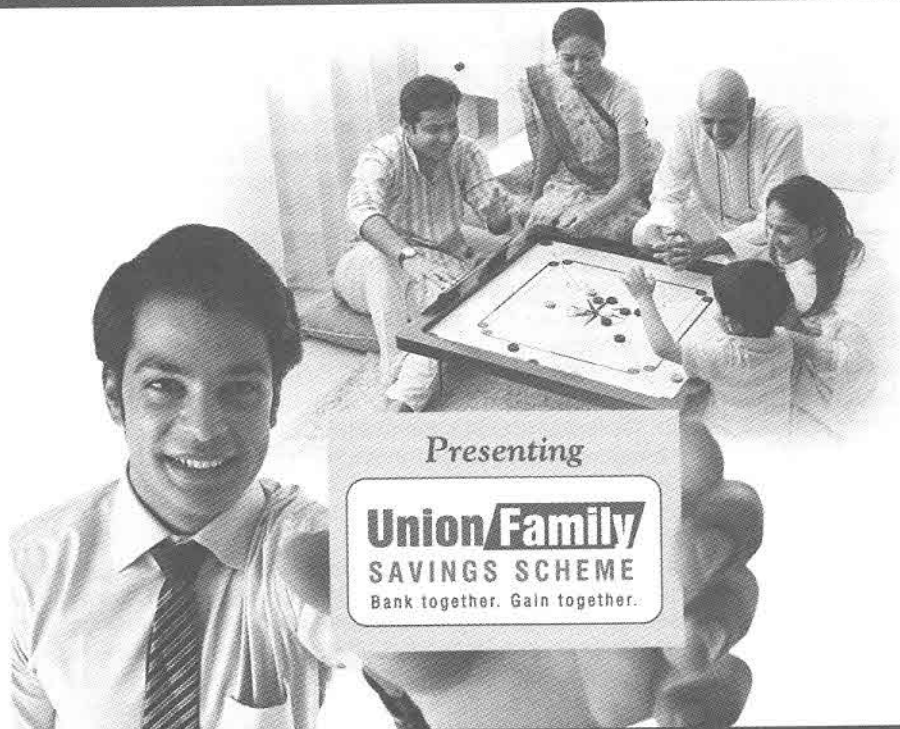
It was only much later that TRS accepted the recording of classes. Notations were also a strict no-no - initially. In this scenario he taught his varnam in raga Sama *Innamumshodanayo* to me without resorting to either recordings or notation. A musician who tries to learn a varnam will realize the practical difficulties of learning a varnam *orally* – it would seem impossible, especially considering the muktaayi swarams and the ettugada swarams. But TRS made it all seem so easy and natural. Small wonder that I have never felt the necessity to "revise" compositions learnt in this manner. I subsequently realized that this was because his classes without exception never ever used to be dull or boring. He would get so spirited with the process of teaching – his passion for imparting musical knowledge really took him and the student together to a different plane.

Clearly, his mission was to propagate Carnatic music everywhere and to distribute his stupendous knowledge to whomever that came seeking it. It never ever even remotely occurred to him to send anyone away empty handed. He was also always alert and on the lookout for imbibing the best knowledge in other musicians and ensuring this for his students as well. Consequently, virtuosos like Lalgudi Jayaraman, D.K.Jayaraman, M. Balamuralikrishna and T.N.Seshagopalan were brought to Delhi to conduct workshops, when all of them were at the peak of their careers. I will conclude with what Tyagaraja says:

**"guruvu cilla ginja guruvE bhramaramu
guruDE bhAskaruDu guruDE bhadrDu
guruDE uttama gati guruvu nlvu-anukoNTi
dharanu dAsuni brOva tyAgarAja nuta"** (Neechittamu - Dhanyasi - Chapu)

The author is a Carnatic vocalist based in Chennai and was a disciple of TRS for thirty-one years till the octogenarian shed his mortal coil on October 04, 2013.

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V. Subrahmaniam-Torch bearer of the Semmangudi School

P. Vasanth Kumar

इहानलुकेहा : OCT-DEC 2013



◀ Shri V. Subrahmaniam

The passing away of V. Subrahmaniam recently severs another direct link with Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. Rajamani, as V. Subrahmaniam was known to his family and close circle of friends was one of the disciples of Semmangudi who had the great fortune of having provided vocal support to the master for close to four decades. Subrahmaniam's faithful upholding of the Semmangudi patanthara, without the slightest deviation put Semmangudi at great ease while having his disciple to provide vocal support for his concerts.

Subrahmaniam was a regular rasika at concerts in Chennai and would be present for most of the concerts at the Music Academy during the December season. He had also served as the Secretary of the institution for a few terms.

As an ardent admirer of T. Brinda's sangeetham, Subrahmaniam learnt several padams and javalis from the doyen which he considered a great privilege.

Though his preference was for the Semmangudi bani, Subrahmaniam was a broad minded vidvan, who would readily accept the unique good aspects of other schools and not fail to express his appreciation when he attended the concerts of different artistes. He had a fond liking for the weighty music of D. K. Jayaraman and reportedly learnt the Papanasam Sivan composition Sharade Veena Vaadana Visharade in Devangandhari from him.

Subrahmaniam was a sought after teacher in Chennai and has had teaching assignments at The Advanced School of Carnatic Music run by the Music Academy and at Kalakshetra. Besides he has imparted training to many students at his residence. Bhavana Iyer and Malavika Sundar are a couple of his disciples who perform concerts frequently.

As an A graded artiste of All India Radio and Doordarshan, Subrahmaniam continued to sing till around 2010. after which he decided to call it a day as he felt that his voice was not delivering what his mind wanted to.

He was one of the founder trustees of the Semmangudi Golden Jubilee Trust till 2013 and he meticulously conducted the annual festival of the trust every year in the month of July. Subrahmaniam put in a lot of hard work for the centenary celebrations of Semmangudi which took place in 2008 at the Music Academy auditorium in Chennai . He also co-authored a book on Semmangudi with music historian V. Sriram which was released on this occasion by the former President of India, Dr Abdul Kalam.

Subrahmaniam participated frequently in the raga lakshana deliberations during the morning sessions of the experts/advisory committee at the Music Academy besides giving lecture demonstrations.

As a fine tunesmith he has set to music select compositions of the Pontiffs of the Sringeri mutt. His last contribution in this connection was the attractive tuning of Shri Sadasivendra Stavah composed by Sri Nrisimha Bharathi Swami on Sadasiva Brahmendral.

Subrahmaniam was also awarded a fellowship by the Sangeet Natak Akademi for a project on raga lakshanas. The compact discs of this project are available with his family for the benefit of students of Carnatic music.

Not a person fond of awards, the Sangeeta Kala Acharya title of the Music Academy bestowed upon him was a timely recognition of Subrahmaniam's vidvath.

P. Vasanth Kumar is a senior Veena Vidwan, writer and music critic based in Chennai.

Shweta Iyer



◀ (l to r) Smt. Kripa Subrahmaniam, granddaughter Amrita, Shri V. Subrahmaniam, granddaughter Shweta Iyer

There are five practices of leadership, and this is called the Kouzes and Posner model. These five practices include Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. Each of these practices / qualities is important in a leader. A leader must have all five of these qualities in order to be considered a great leader. In this reflection essay I will proceed to explain why my late grandfather, V. Subrahmaniam was a great leader in the Indian Carnatic Music World and an inspiring teacher at the same time using the Kouzes and Posner model of leadership.

"Model The Way" is the first practice that a leader must show. "Titles are granted, but it's your behavior that earns you respect." My grandfather became a very well-known musician and had won several accolades. This earned him the title of a "Great Indian Carnatic Musician". But my grandfather never once used his title as a way of demanding respect. His way of demanding respect was always treating each one of his students with kindness and patience. By doing this he was easily able to earn their respect. He never turned away any student who wanted to learn. In fact, he had students who lived all over the world from America to Australia. Learning Carnatic music is a long journey. It takes learning from a teacher who can break down myriad nuances to learn it. It also takes years of hard work and practice, practice, practice. My grandfather would tell his students they could only perform a piece after they had practised it enough times so it had sunk into their soul. He himself would never perform a piece on stage till he practised it at least a hundred times. My grandfather demonstrated "Model the Way" because he practised whatever he preached. His students saw that he never let his recognition in the Carnatic music world get in the way of his being their teacher. He also only expected them to do what he himself did.

The second practice of leadership is "Share a Common Vision". This is when a leader has a clear vision of what he expects whether it's from a team or a group of people at work. This shared vision was shown in the movie "Remember the Titans". Denzel Washington played a coach in this movie. He gave a speech to his players, in which he made it clear to the team what he expected from them, and that was respect. Similarly, my grandfather also had a shared vision. His vision was to make each student who wanted to learn from him excel at it. He made this clear in the manner in which he taught each student to sing. He would, if necessary, repeat a phrase over and over again breaking it down till the student grasped it. He never showed any frustration during this time. He was very specific on the correct way to render every nuance and was willing to share this vision with his students till they understood it. His shared vision with his student was to make every student excel no matter how long it took.

The third practice of leadership is "Challenge the Process". Challenge the Process is when a leader challenges the manner in which something is routinely done. My grandfather did not display this leadership practice because he only followed what process he had been taught by his guru (teacher). My grandfather had great regard for his teacher and did not want to challenge the process in which the music was taught. He genuinely believed it had been a very successful process and so refused to "Challenge the Process" in the way he taught his students.

The fourth practice of leadership is "Enable Others to Act". This is when you build trust in others so that they can in turn trust you. An example of this is when Lorena Compean, (the founder of Co-Creating in Hong Kong) realized that as project manager checking every single analysis that her team did was not earning her the respect as a leader. She realized in order to establish a relationship of trust she must trust her team on what they are doing so that they in turn can trust her as a leader. Enabling Others to Act is also serving the needs of others, and not focusing on one's own need at the same time. My grandfather demonstrated this fourth practice of leadership because he always focused on the needs of his students. The needs of the student varied from student to student because each student demanded something different. Some students learned very quickly, some did not. Some had confidence as they sang but some needed encouragement to blossom. My grandfather customized his teaching to each student. He encouraged them to perform difficult pieces on stage. Students who had no confidence to go on stage did it when they started learning from him. This is how he enabled them to act. By showing he trusted them to sing well what he had taught, he earned their trust.

The last practice of leadership is called "Encourage the Heart". This quality too was displayed by my grandfather. In a recent tribute to him, one of my grandfather's students recounted her experience. She said when she came to learn music from my grandfather she had already been learning music for several years. However, she could never master the art of imaginative singing and had given up. But my grandfather with his quiet insistence told her that she could do it and would tell her to close her eyes and just sing whatever she felt. She said doing this has really improved her ability to sing this way. So my grandfather motivated her using the Encourage the Heart practice to sing this way even when she felt she could not do it.

My grandfather, V. Subrahmaniam embodied the qualities of a leader. He was a leader in teaching Carnatic music. In fact one of the titles that my grandfather received was "Sangeeta Kala Acharya" which translated means a "Great Teacher of Music".

Shweta Iyer is a final year student at Babson College, Wellesley, Massachusetts. She is also a Bharatanatyam dancer, a black belt in karate and an avid reader.

OBITUARY



◀ Lakshmi Shankar

Be it the divine love of Mirabai in *Mere to Giridhar Gopal* or the imploring words of a beloved in *Na Jao Saiyan Pardes* or a soulfully rendered Khyal in Ahirbhairav, Lakshmi Shankar could keep the audience spellbound. Her clear, sweet and melodious voice with its velvety feel which could traverse the higher octaves effortlessly had this magical quality of mesmerizing the listeners sending them into raptures. Lakshmi Shankar began her career as a dancer but had to give it up due to ill-health. Having had her basic training in Carnatic music, she went on to learn Hindustani classical music under Ustad Abdul Rehman Khan of the Patiala

Gharana. Later she also trained under her illustrious brother-in-law, Sitar Maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar and worked with him on several ballets, films and festivals. A versatile singer who gave life to khyals, bhajans, thumris and Tamil folk songs, she breathed her last on 30th December 2013 at the age of 87.

Tukkada - 4

Quiz on Sangeeta and Natya¹

1. How is the veena that Dikshitar got from his guru different from the normal one in shape?
2. Mention the three great musician-vaggeyakaras who were disciples of Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer.
3. Some vidwans start Tyagaraja's kriti *Mitri Bhagyame* in Kharaharapriya from anupallavi. Why?
4. There are different talas that have the same number of beats although their subdivisions into *angas* are different. What is wrong if the talas with the same total number of beats are changed from one to the other? [Ex. Chatusra Rupakam and Tisra Ekam (2 kalai) with six beats]
5. Who set the music for Swati Tirunal's Dhanashree tillana?
6. How were Syama Sastri and Subbaraya Sastri related?
7. *Yaro ivar yaro* in "Ramanataka Keertanaikal" in Bhairavi was originally sung in Saveri. Who re-tuned it to Bhairavi?
8. Who inspired Tyagaraja to sing *Endaro Mahanubhavulu* in Sri raga.
9. Which is the State which originated the practice of using the mridangam as an accompaniment for Tanam?
10. Who were the first recipients of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for Hindustani and Carnatic music?
11. She had originally a female voice and became popular at a young age through her 78 rpm records containing not only khayals but other forms of light music like ghazals. Later due to a throat surgery her voice became masculine. Still she could sing melodiously till the age of 95 earning accolades from the commoner and the cognoscenti. She belonged to the Kirana gharana. Who was she?
12. Why is the piano considered a percussion instrument?
13. Which is the famous composition in Western classical music that is played at the conclusion of wedding ceremonies in the Christian Church?
14. Long before the 108 karanas of Natya Sastra were portrayed in the temples in Chidambaram, Tanjavur and Kumbakonam they were represented in images in a place in the Java island of Indonesia. Where is it in Java?
15. The term 'Bharatanatyam' is often considered to have been coined by Rukmini Devi. But there is a reference to it in a Purandaradasar kriti. Name it.

¹ The objective of the column is not only to test the knowledge of the readers but also to supplement it. They are welcome to send dissenting letters with supporting evidence, if they do not agree with the answers on page.40 It is important for keeping the record straight.

Homage to Prof. T.R. Subramanyam

Prof.T.R. Subramanyam was a dedicated teacher and 'pracharak' of Carnatic music. He had an original approach to presentation. He used to teach promising students without charging them any fee. He encouraged many talented artistes and tried to make their talents known to the public.

Prof. T.R. Subramanyam used to go on three month teaching assignments to the USA at the Pittsburg Temple. He gave concerts for whatever remuneration the sabhas or organisers gave him. He has done a lot of service for Shanmukhananda Sabha. I have interacted with Prof. T.R.S on two or three occasions and have got good enlightenment.

N. Hariharan

An unpardonable error has occurred in my homage piece on Vidwan Ramachandran Sir. I wrote he died at the age of 93. He was born in October 1928. So he died at 84 years. My apologies for the same.

N. Hariharan (Former Assistant Editor, "Times of India," Mumbai)

An excerpt from Shri 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan's letter to the Honourable Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Shri E.S.L. Narasimhan with reference to his valedictory address at the Sabha

Your Excellency, the Sangithacharya,

Your address is unique indeed! It carries lessons for me & others who seek to draw wisdom. Actually the virtuous Sage and Saint of Tiruvaiyaru would seem to have travelled to Mumbai to be in and with you as you delivered the address. "Narasimha! Nannubrovave, Sri Lakshmi!"

'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

'Shanmukha' Apr-June 2013

I received. a copy of 'Shanmukha' April-June 2013 issue. I read with great interest the articles on the late lamented Lalgudi, MSG, etc. I used to read this journal at the Music Academy Library till some years back. I am happy that it is maintaining its excellent standards. I congratulate the members of the Editorial Board. I had the privilege of being acquainted with the veteran music critic late Shri K.S. Mahadevan, former Editor of 'Shanmukha' , attending concerts with him & discussing various aspects of music. I miss his fair and gentle reviews.

Achal Krishnaswamy

WRITE TO US!

We would love to get to know you, dear reader, and hear your views, suggestions and thoughts on the journal or any topic related to the performing arts.

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ANDAL THIRU KALYANAM 19TH AND 20TH OCTOBER 2013

"Andal Thirukalyanam" was hosted by the Sabha for the first time in Mumbai at Shanmukhananda auditorium. The 'celestial wedding' was performed by Sri Sri Sri Sadakopa Ramanuja Jeeyar of Srivilliputtur.



A scene from Andal Vaibhavam - a Dance - drama presented by Rukminidevi Naatya Kshetram, Chennai

Report

Indian National Orchestra 27th October 2013

Vasumathi Arvind



Indian National Orchestra led by Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh

The Indian National Orchestra, a brain-child of Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh is a confluence of the classical music of North and South India using performing musicians (vocal and instrumental) of both genres on a common platform. Led by Jayanthi Kumaresh on the Veena, the INO had Embar Kannan and Charulatha Ramanujam on the violin, Rafique Khan and Shafique Khan on the Sitar, Amit Nadig and Annada Pattanaik Bhutto on the flute, Fayaz Khan on the Sarangi and singing Hindustani vocal, Bharath Sundar singing Carnatic vocal, Arjun Kumar on the mridangam, Trichy Krishna on the ghatam, Guruprasanna on the kanjira, Udayraj Kapur on the tabla, Ravindra Katoti on the harmonium, Pramath Kiran on Creative Percussion and Ramya Raghavan and Ambarish Amaravadi giving support on the veena.

Oothukadu Venkatasubbaiyer's *Shri Vighnarajam Bhaje* in Gambhiranattai in praise of Lord Ganesha, a favourite God of all Indians set the mood for the evening. *Dancing Peacock* was a tribute to India's national bird which was in the raga Ritigowla and was prefaced with an alapana by Jayanthi on the veena and Embar Kannan on the violin. *Gangeshwari* was an excellent piece which was set to raga Gangeshwari created by Pandit Ravi Shankar. The contribution made by each and every instrument was commendable and in all they created the effect of a surging river raging forth in all its fury. The verses from Adi Shankaracharya's 'Gangashtakam' lent a spiritual feel to the performance. *Himalayan Heights* was set to the Hindustani raga Bhinna Lalit and Haricharan, a Carnatic raga. The ascent on the mountains began with the beats of the percussion instruments which slowly blended into the gentle strains of the sitar and sarangi, the melodious notes of the flute and the brilliant playing of the harmonium, finally reaching the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas. Ravindra Katoti's fingers glided effortlessly over the harmonium creating the most amazing sound effects leaving the audience spellbound. A flavour of rural India was brought in with a composition in Behag. It began with an alap on the flute with all the other instruments joining in as the composition progressed. *Kashmir to Kanyakumari*, based on a Tillana by Lalgudi G. Jayaraman in Sindhuhairavi (which is used in all genres), with Fayaz Khan's outstanding vocals brought this musical extravaganza to an exciting finish.

All in all it was an exhilarating experience marked by brilliant synchronization- an experience that was true to the Indian philosophy of Unity in Diversity.

Centenary Celebration and Felicitation of Smt. Alarmel Valli 28th October 2013

Jyothi Mohan



*Guru Kalyanasundaram
felicitating Alarmel Valli*

The Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha commemorated the centenary of the Pandanallur Guru Subbaraya Pillai and felicitated Padma Bhushan Alarmel Valli, his prime disciple, on completing 50 years on stage. The president of the sabha Shri V.Shankar spoke about the Pandanallur bani, its origin and the important role played by Guru Meenakshisundaram Pillai. Later his son-in-law Valli's guru, the renowned Chokkalingam Pillai and his son Subbaraya Pillai continued the family tradition. These gurus were known to be uncompromising task masters who taught with a rare commitment and set high standards for their bani. Guru Kalyanasundaram, who was present on the occasion spoke about the invaluable contribution of both Rukmini Devi and Mrinalini Sarabhai. It was Rukmini Devi who brought the Pandanallur Gurus to Chennai to train students in their pristine

style. He commended the role Mrinalini Sarabhai played in taking the Pandanallur tradition to Gujarat, spreading Bharatanatyam in western India. He was all praise for Alarmel Valli's unwavering dedication to her art and her being on stage for five decades with undiminished enthusiasm and verve. Alarmel Valli was presented with a beautiful Kuthivillaku, taller than her and a shawl by the sabha. Replying to the address made by the President of the sabha, Alarmel Valli reminisced that she had danced in this very hallowed sabha thirty years ago when the celebrated vocalist Padmasri Smt. Sudha Raghunathan had sung for her. She deemed it a great honour to be felicitated by such a distinguished sabha, she said. Paying tributes to her illustrious gurus who had moulded her and were responsible for her success as an artiste, she said she was indeed blessed to have had such wonderful gurus. They imparted the best of their tradition to her with no expectations of any kind, she added. Commitment to the cause of Bharatanatyam and a totally non-commercial attitude towards the art set them apart even in those days, she stated. They led austere lives and made no compromises on their values and integrity while teaching, she added. She was extremely grateful to them for not only giving her the grammar and vocabulary of this delightful bani, but also for allowing her the freedom to innovate within the framework of the tradition they had passed on to her. After this brief felicitation programme, Alarmel Valli took to the stage to present 'Scent of the Earth.'

'Scent of the Earth' by Smt. Alarmel Valli 28th October 2013

Jyothi Mohan

'Scent of the Earth'-a tribute to the dynamic and creative interdependence between the inner and outer worlds, said the brochure. The complicated explanation of the title had the audience speculating on the theme Padmabhushan Alarmel Valli would present on 28th October 2013 at the Shanmukhananda's Chandrasekharendra Saraswati auditorium

She commenced with salutations to Surya in Adityaya Namastubhyam. This ragamalika compilation of verses from Suryashtakam, Kamba Ramayanam among other sacred texts, painted a glorious picture of nature at dawn as the first rays of the sun appear. The superb lighting and apt music set by Prema Ramamurthy and Lata Ramchand for this invocatory number made it indeed very special. The power and energy of Surya, as the rays gently kiss the petals of the bud, the slow blooming of the flower, the fluttering of winged creatures and the chirping of happy birds showcased nature at her very best. This was followed by the varnam, a composition of Prema Ramamurthy, again in ragamalika, in praise of Lord Nataraja. 'Kaana Aavalaanen' is a depiction of the yearning of the nayika to be united with her Lord. She sees him in every creation of nature around her, be it in the rising sun, in the dark clouds, in the rain drops filling her with an intense

longing. The blue sky reminded her of Neelakantha. In the line, *Paravasamigum vasanthamidil mohalahiri meerude*, in ragam vasanta, Valli portrayed spring as a harbinger of love. The nayika chides her Lord for his indifference as spring kindles desires within her. Her elation at being in Chidambaram was beautifully sketched in the line in ragam charukesi, *Needhi nilavum Thillai ambalam tanil aadum Chidambara naadanai*. Valli took us through the grandeur of the Chidambaram temple. In the charanam, Valli as the heroine chides her sakhi for her indifference and pleads with her to hasten and fetch her Lord to her. The garland of alluring ragas added to the beauty of the sahitya and was an aural and visual treat.



Alarmel Valli

A Valli recital without Sangam poetry is unimaginable! She has breathed life and melody into these ancient poems. *Sirai Pani* from 'Kuruntogai' was set to ragam Shivananjani by Prema Ramamoorthy. The setting was that of a cold winter's night that evoked the mood of desolation and despair. The heroine feels utterly lonely and cheerless and the lightning and harsh stormy winds add to her misery. A contrast to this mood was the following javali, *Muttavaddura* in ragam Saveri composed by the Thanjavur quartet. The bitter and angry nayika rebukes her lover for his philandering ways. Valli brought out the contrasting emotions with finesse. The concluding Nrittalahari in Abhogi composed by Prema Ramamurthy brought the evening to a lively end. The emotion-packed vocal support by Preeti Mahesh, crisp nattuvangam by C.K.Vasudevan, masterly mridangam flourishes by Sakhtivel, evocative violin by K.P.Nandini, and mood-enhancing flute by Sruti Sagar added greatly to the success of Alarmel Valli's performance.

Vocal Concert of Sanjay Subrahmanyam 29th October 2013

Nalini Dinesh



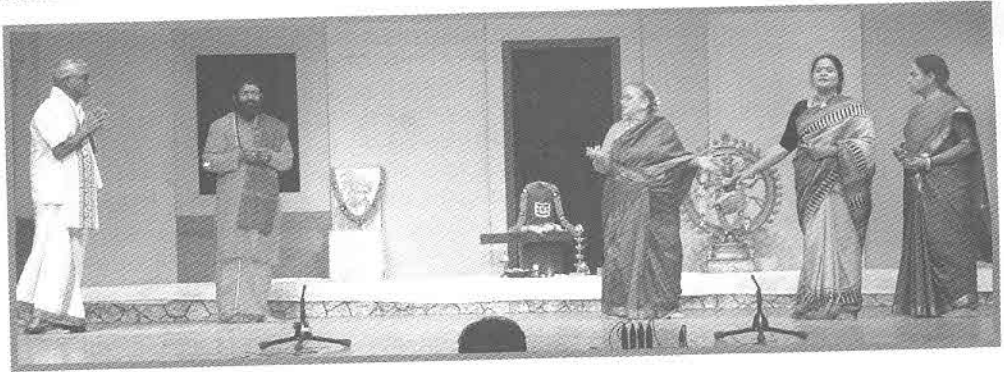
(l to r) B. Harikumar (mridangam), Alathur Rajaganesh (kanjira), Sanjay Subrahmanyam (vocal), S. Varadarajan (violin)

Sanjay began his concert with Calcutta Krishnamurthy's beautiful varnam in Malavi *Ninne kori* followed by *Ninnu joochi dhanyudaiti* (Sowrashtram). A very good Reetigowla alapana by vocalist and violinist prefaced the *Swati Tirunal's* kriti *Paripaalayamaam* with brief kalpana swaras for pallavi. A highlight of the concert was an excellent Janaranjani alapana with rare and uncommon sancharas. Varadarajan faithfully reproduced the vocalist's raga interpretation. The Tyagaraja kriti *Nadadinamata* was sung with neraval at "Talaku vacchina" and kalpana swaras. A couple of swaras were in a western style which went well with the raga bhava. The slow tempo swaras had a lot of variety and the 2nd speed swaras were presented well. Following a Madhyamavati alapana, one felt some disappointment when Sanjay embarked on a not so well-known song *Kanna kaatharul meghavarna* whose pallavi setting sounded more like an RTP. However, with the neraval at "Ulagellam mangala deepavali oli veesa", the cloud lifted and the disappointment slowly turned into joy followed by wonder at how effectively Sanjay managed to create the spirit of

Deepavali inside the auditorium! A vast exploration of Kalyani followed with different hues of the raga shining through. *Needu charana* was the kriti with delightful neraval and intricate swaras at "O Jagajjanani". Following an outstanding tani by Harikumar and Rajaganesh, a song of Koteeshwara Iyer *Paraamukham* in Shulini preceded the RTP in Brindavani. Both vocal and violin alapana were evocative. After enduring a period of experimental angst, the rasika has again started looking forward to Sanjay's concerts that are now full of little surprises (like the "gift" for Deepavali season described above) and are quite "hatke", to use a Mumbai slang!

'Bandam'- Tamil drama by Shanmukha Theatre Group, Written & Directed by Smt. Santhosh Rajan 9th November 2013

Vasumathi Arvind



A scene from Bandam

Bandam was inspired by a real life incident reported to Smt. Santhosh Rajan who has written and directed the play. The story is set in a remote village Pudukode in Kerala and revolves around a cook Gopalakrishnan and his wife Lalithai, their daughters and a son Krishnamani who unlike his sisters is not interested in studies and leaves the house and inadvertently joins an Ashram in New Delhi. The message carried by the play was that children should be allowed to choose their own careers so that they can shine in their chosen fields. The play is also a lesson for devotees who, without using their discretion become followers of fake Gurus and God men. Subalakshmi Iyer as Annapoorneswari, Santhosh Rajan as Lalithai, R. Pichai as Gopalakrishnan, Ramakrishnan who acts as Subramani but agrees to become Krishnamani to appease an old, ailing father and Chembur Hari as Suryananda, shone in their respective roles. The comedy part of the drama was ably managed by K. Lakshman as Santhanam and R. Meenalatha as Minakshi. The dialogues delivered in a heavy Palghat accent gave a very homely feel and was thoroughly enjoyed by the audience. The climax touched a chord in the hearts of the audience, bringing tears to the eyes of many. The interesting story with its twists and turns, the effective dialogues with a lot of punch and the direction, all of it by Smt. Santosh Rajan made it a very enjoyable experience. Music and sound cues by Sriram Rajan were particularly noteworthy. The highlight of the play was a poem in Tamil and English written by Smt. Santhosh Rajan used in the first and the last scenes which formed a bridge between the sister and the brother.

Amarar Kalki's 'Sivagamiyin Sabhadam'- A Dance Musical by Madurai Shri R. Muralidaran & his group 11th November 2013

Jyothi Mohan

Kalki Krishnamurthy's magnum opus Sivagamiyin Sabadham is a compelling story of two rulers, replete with intrigue and romance. Set in 7th century South India, it features the struggle for supremacy between Chalukya emperor Pulakesi II and Pallava emperor Mahendravarman. The kidnapping of dancer Sivagami by Pulakesi and her vow for revenge form the main thread of this



A scene from *Sivagamiyin Sabadham*

story. This classic was presented by Madurai R. Muralidaran at the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha during the Drama and Dance Festival on 11th November 2013. Screen play, lyrics and direction was by Shri Madurai R.Muralidaran.

It was a daunting challenge to stage this 1000-page historical thriller which Kalki has immortalized with his brilliant pen. Muralidaran picked up the gauntlet with passion and the slick, colourful, opulent extravaganza relying heavily on the state of art technology satisfied even the staunchest aficionados of Amaram Kalki.



◀ *Pavitra Bhat and Kavyalakshmi as Narasimha Pallavar and Sivagami*

The dance drama opened with salutations to Lord Shiva with the Siva Namavali. The huge stage of Shanmukhananda Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Auditorium had too many dancers in the opening number so much so, that the vast stage looked very cluttered. The narration of the dance drama followed a short introductory group dance. The story began from the 4th part of the book with Aayanar Chirpi lamenting the abduction of his daughter Sivagami by Pulakesi. In a flashback he recollects happier days. The beautiful dance duet of Narasimha Pallavar and Sivagami was full of vitality and grace. Pavitra Bhat and Kavyalakshmi Muralidaran lived their parts with conviction. Pavitra impressed with his crisp dancing and good abhinaya. Little Sivagami and her friends also danced with great joy

and confidence and the audience loved it. Before he leaves to fight a war at Vatapi, Narasimha Pallavar while conversing with his wife, reminisces about those carefree days in the company of Sivagami. The next scene featured Sivagami's *Ananda Tandavam* during her arangetram in the court which was marked by allure and dynamism. Kavya did full justice to the choreography which however was a tad filmy. Her dance was marked by agility, vivaciousness and good technique. Uma Muralidaran's portrayal of the older Sivagami was very touching. Her emotions in Thirunavukkarasar's 'Munnam Avanudaya Naamam Kaettaal' touched a chord. In the final scene, when Narasimha Pallavar walked past with his wife and children, Sivagami realised that he had indeed moved on in life. That moment was beautifully conveyed by Uma. Shri Muralidaran who played the dual role of the arrogant Pulakesi and the crafty Naganandi was very convincing. Paranjoti played by Sanath Kumar, Mahendra Pallavar by Purushottam, Aayanar by Nikhil Zope, the Queen by Lakshmi Pillai, all deserve special mention. The excellent backdrops which were massive, some in 3D, brought alive the scenes portrayed. Many took us back to the 7th century! Excellent stagecraft, quicksilver changes in scenes and fabulous lighting added to the grandeur of the slick production. Mention must be made of the athletic male dancers who played the role of warriors and whose killing in the war was depicted in slow motion very dramatically. All the local actors and dancers, who learnt their roles in barely a week, added lustre to the dance drama by their faultless contribution. There was something for every member of the audience. The lively folk dances were enjoyed by the audience as much as the drama and intrigue. Shri Muralidaran graciously thanked the local teachers who sent their students in large numbers to participate in this mega production. The excellent music by Shri Madurai R.Muralidaran and Shri D.A.Srinivas, brilliant choreography by Smt.Chitra Muralidaran, lighting by Rinitha and Padmavasan's amazing artwork contributed in no small measure to the success of this venture, which was akin to a blockbuster.

Sri Shanmukhananda Sabha's National Eminence Award 14th December 2013

Vasumathi Arvind

The 14th Sri Shanmukhananda National Eminence Award was conferred on Sangeet Marthand

Padma Vibhushan Pandit Jasraj for lifetime contribution in fine arts. The solemn occasion commenced with a vedic invocation and a prayer, *Kamakshi*, sung by Dharini and Gayathry, students of the Sangeetha Vidyalaya. The keynote address was delivered by President V. Shankar who introduced the 83 year old eminent vocalist as the doyen of the Mewati Gharana of Hindustani classical music. He was initiated into vocal music by his father but received training



Pandit Jasraj being conferred the Sabha's National Eminence Award by Pujyasri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal

under his brother Pandit Maniram. He declined an offer from Bade Ghulam Ali Khan to become his disciple, since he was already under the tutelage of his brother. Pandit Jasraj is known for "Jasrangi", a new type of Jugalbandi created by him. Dr.V.Rangaraj read the citation. Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, Pujyasri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal conferred the award.. Pujyashri Jayendra Saraswati gave a brief *anugraha bhashanam* in Hindi extolling the exemplary qualities of Pandit Jasraj's music. Pandit Jasraj in his response was humility personified when he said, "I don't know anything. It is all God's grace." Spiritual institutions like Kanchi Matham, Sringeri

Matham, Asthika Samaj, Bhajana Samaj, Shankara Matham and Bhakta Anjaneya Trust offered temple honours to Swami and the artists while leading sister institutions of Mumbai felicitated the artists.



(l to r) Shri Ramakant Gaikwad, Shri B.S.Purushothaman, Pandit Jasraj, President V. Shankar, Shri Ramakrishnan Murthy, Vice Presidents R. Narayanan & Dr. V. Rangaraj

Shanmukha Sangeetha Shiromani awards for 2013 were conferred on Shri.Ramakrishnan Murthy for Carnatic vocal, Shri. B.S.Purushothaman for kanjira and Shri. Ramakant Gaikwad for Hindustani vocal music. Vice – President R. Narayanan proposed the vote of thanks.



(l to r) Sriram Subbaraman (Mridangam), B.S. purushothaman (Kanjira), Ramakrishnan Murthy (Vocal), Charumathi Raghuram (Violin)

The function was followed by Ramakrishnan Murthy's Carnatic vocal concert. He was accompanied by Charumathi Raghuram on the violin, Sriram Subbaraman on the mridangam and B.S. Purushothaman on the kanjira. Thyagaraja's *Rama nee samanam evaru* in Kharaharapriya with niraval and crisp swaras at "paluku paluku" set the tone for the concert which was ably supported by Charumathi Raghuram. A detailed alapana of Shankarabharanam preceded Subbarama Dikshitar's *Shankaracharyam* with niraval and swaras woven with interesting korvais at "parama gnana". The tani by Sriram Subbaraman and B.S. Purushothaman was very impressive. A viruttam *Kaadalagi Kashindu* in Sindhubhairavi followed by *Vishweshwara* brought the recital to a close.

Jagadguru Sankaracharya Sri Jayendra Saraswati National Eminence Award 15th December 2013

Vasumathi Arvind



◀ Kum A. Kanyakumari being conferred the Jagadguru Sankaracharya Sri Jayendra Saraswati National Eminence Award by Pujyasri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal

The 10th Jagadguru Sankaracharya Sri Jayendra Saraswati National Eminence Award in Fine Arts was conferred on renowned violinist Kum . A. Kanyakumari. The award instituted by the 69th Acharya Sri Jayendra Saraswati was conferred on the occasion of the 10th Sri Kanchi Mahaswami Festival organized by the Sabha. The function began with a

Vedapaatham followed by an invocation, *Bhajare Guru Natham*, a song in praise of Mahaswami Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati written by Sri Jayendra Saraswati which was rendered by Jayashri Suresh and Abhilasha Chellam. The citation was read by Vice-President Shri R. Narayanan.



• (l to r) K.V.Prasad (Mridangam), A. Kanyakumari (Violin),
Embar Kannan (Violin), Anirudh Athreya (Kanjira)

The award function was followed by a Carnatic Violin Duet by Kum, A. Kanyakumari and Shri Embar Kannan. They were accompanied by Shri. K.V.Prasad on the mridangam and Shri Anirudh Athreya on the kanjira. Kanyakumari and Embar Kannan got off to a flying start with Muthuswamy Dikshitar's *Mahaganapathim* in Nattai for which they played kalpana swaras at "Mahakavya". A brief alapana of Bhairavi was followed by Shyama Shastri's Swarajati *Kamakshi*.

The scintillating alapana of Kalyanavasantham was shared by both artistes and they played *Shri Venkatesham* ,a rare kriti of Muthuswamy Dikshitar. The kalpana swaras played for the pallavi were breath taking. Thyagaraja's *Shantamuleka* was rendered next after a brief alapana of Sama. Their bows then went flying over the strings of their violins as they played a breezy *Ninnaadane* by Thyagaraja in Kannada. *Dinamanivamsha* of Thyagaraja was rendered after an excellent and pristine alapana of Harikambhoji. They displayed amazing virtuosity in the rendering of kalpana swaras which had interesting patterns and a fast paced kuraippu. The Tani by K.V.Prasad and Anirudh Athreya was brilliant. Kanyakumari then played and sang with great bhava an Annamacharya kriti, *Melu ledu neevu ledu* in Narayanaadri. (one of the 7 ragas created by Kanyakumari named after the 7 hills of Tirupati). *Baro Krishnayya, Pibare Rama Rasam* , a bhajan in Ahir Bhairav, a tillana which was her own composition in Sindhubhairavi , *Venkatachala Nilayam* and Annamacharya's *Bhagyada Lakshmi Baramma* in Sri ragam concluded the captivating recital.

FORM IV

(See Rule 8 of Press & Registration of Book Act)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Place of Publication | : | Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.) |
| 2. Periodicity of Publication | : | Quarterly |
| 3. Printer's Name & Address | : | Concise Graphics & Marketing
Asthvinayak Bldg., Shop No. 8,
Chinchpokli, Mumbai - 400012 |
| 4. Publisher's Name | : | Shri V. S. Amarnath Sury
169/3 Owners' House, Sion (E),
Mumbai - 400022 |
| 5. Editor's Name | : | Smt. Radha Namboodiri |
| Nationality | : | Indian |
| Address | : | Flat No. 2 Shivalaya, 70, Shivaji Park,
Dadar (W), Mumbai - 400028. |
| 6. Name and Address of individuals who Own the Newspaper and Partners or Share-holder Holding More than One percent of the capital | : | Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.)
292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg,
Sion (East), Mumbai - 400022 |
- I, V. S. Amarnath Sury, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.



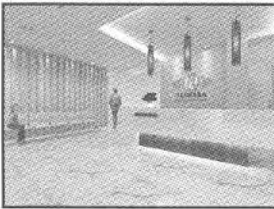
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Answers to Quiz on Sangeeta and Natya

1. The head of Yali is turned upwards.
2. Tiger Varadachariar, Mysore Vasudevachar and 'Poochi' Srinivasa Iyengar
3. The anupallavi ends with *sau*. Combined with *mitri* it becomes *saumitri*, another name for Lakshmana and thus makes sense.
4. It affects *arudi*.
5. Lalgudi Jayaraman, at the instance of Semmangudi Srinivasier.
6. They were father and son.
7. Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar.
8. Shatkala Govinda Marar.
9. Kerala.
10. Mushtaq Hussain Khan and Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar in 1952.
11. Gangubai Hangal.
12. Because sound is produced when hammers strike the strings within the instrument the piano is often classified as a percussion instrument. (*Music*, Daniel T Politoske)
13. *Wedding March*. It is the incidental music that Mendelssohn wrote for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* of Shakespeare. It was conceived as an accompaniment to the several marriages that form the happy ending of the play. It continues to be played at the conclusion of numerous wedding ceremonies. (*Music*, *Ibid*)
14. Prambanan
15. *Adidano Ranga* in Arabhi. (*Urvashi ramaniyarellaru cendadim bharata natyava na tise*)

Scores (one mark for each correct answer)

Less than 6: Hope is eternal! Start on *sarali varisai*.

6-10: Good progress! Fit to learn *varnam*.

11-15: Congratulations! Proceed to Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi.

Report

Saraswati Puja Concert by students of Kalyani Sharma 13th Oct 2013

Nalini Dinesh



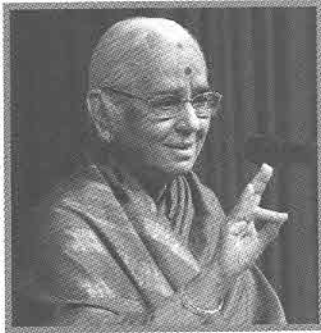
(l to r) S. Gopakumar (mridangam), Bhavani Srinivasan, Sunita Ganesh, Prema Krishnan, Bharathy Nagaraj, Hemamalini Arun, Sidhi Krishnamoorthy, Vanamala Dixit (violin)

An assorted set of Devi kritis culled from Oothukadu Venkata Kavi's Kamakshi navavaranam, Dikshitar's Neelotpalamba, Kamalamba and Abhayamba navavaranam and Swati Tirunal's Navaratri kritis was presented by students of Kalyani Sharma on the occasion of Saraswati pooja. Over the years, Smt. Kalyani Sharma has worked on expanding her students' repertoire in this niche area of Carnatic compositions, namely samudaaya kritis, especially navavarana kritis and the Vidyalaya has been the happy beneficiary of this senior guru's efforts. The recital commenced with a shloka *Vakratunda* in Kalyani raga by Prema Krishnan followed by the dhyana kriti in Kalyani of Kamakshi navavaranam *Vanchasi yati, Abhayambikaayaah*, the fifth Abhayamba navavarana kriti in Kedaragowla which invokes the Devi in the Trailokya Mohana chakra of the auspicious Shree chakram, *Shree Neelotpalanaayike* the 8th Neelotpalamba kriti in Reetigowla, the 7th Kamalamba navavarana kriti in Sahana (Sarvaroga Nivaarana Chakram) and Swati Tirunal's 8th day Navaratri kriti *Pahi janani santatam* (Natakuranji). The recital concluded with *Haladaraanujam* (Manirangu) which is the phalashruti kriti of the Kamakshi navavaranam suite of Venkatakavi in which, in a seemingly contrarian fashion, he prays to the goddess requesting access to his Ishtadevata Lord Krishna! To quote the concluding lines of Chitraveena Ravikiran's introduction to Kamakshi navavarana kritis in his eponymous book – "The spirit of this can be taken from the dashama skanda of Shreemad Bhagavatam which describes the Katyayani vrata undertaken by the gopis to be blessed with Krishna as their husband." Able support was provided by Vanamala Dixit on the violin and S. Gopakumar on the mridangam. Sidhi Krishnamoorthy compered the programme competently.

Lecture-demonstration on "Manodharma in Carnatic music" by Sangeetha Kalanidhi Smt. R. Vedavalli 23rd October 2013

Vasumathi Arvind

Students and teachers of the Vidyalaya were indeed a privileged lot when they got the opportunity of listening to Sangeetha Kalanidhi Smt. Vedavalli's lecture-demonstration on how to develop "manodharma" in Carnatic music.



◀ Sangeetha Kalanidhi Smt. R. Vedavalli

The Principal introduced Smt. Vedavalli as the illustrious disciple of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Madurai Srirangam Iyengar and Sangeetha Kalanidhi Mudicondan Venkatarama Iyer. She is a unique musician who believes in upholding the traditional path of Sampradaya Sangeetham, and also in innovative traditionalism. Raga alapana, niraval, kalpana swaras and tanam singing are the hall marks of her music. So it was indeed befitting that her lecture-demonstration was on 'manodharma' in Carnatic music.

Smt. Vedavalli divided manodharma into four segments: raga alapana, tanam, niraval and kalpana swaras. She stressed on the fact that in an alapana, maintaining the swaroopalakshanam of a raga is more important than adhering to the arohana-avarohana of a raga. Use of vowel sounds brings out the melody in an alapana. While singing tanam, the word 'anantham' must be used. Any line of a kriti can be taken up for niraval but the words should be few and meaningful. Regarding kalpana swaras she said that one will be able to sing swaras at any point of the kriti so long as one knows the swaroopalakshanam of the raga. Kalpanaswaras can be practised by making permutations and combinations in a particular range of swaras. She also demonstrated the handling of niraval and swara-singing by making two students of the Vidyalaya, Dharini and Gayathry sing different varieties in neraval and kalpana swaras. The students rose to the occasion. With the help of Dr. Sumathi Krishnan, Smt. Vedavalli explained the do's and don't's of raga alapana. She concluded her lecture-demonstration with some useful tips to teachers of music on how to develop creativity in their students.

Shri Amarnath Sury, Convenor of the Sangeetha Vidyalaya said that we have no less than a Sangeetha Kalanidhi in our midst and our students and teachers are indeed fortunate to receive expert guidance from a stalwart for handling manodharma aspect of our music which needs years of assiduous practice.

Muthuswamy Dikshitar Day 16th November 2013

Vasumathi Arvind



(l to r) Rohit Prasad (Mridangam), Ramaswamy Venkateswaran (Vocal), Vimarshini Jairam (Violin)

Ramaswamy Venkateswaran commenced his recital with the shloka *Gurur Brahma* in Mohanam and rendered *Raktha Ganapathim* which had the ragamudra incorporated in it. *Himagiri kumari Eashwari* in the raga Ravikriya preceded *Shri Kalahastisha* in Huseini. The raga bhava of Huseini was well brought out by Ramaswamy. A brief alapana of Vasanta

prefaced *Hariharaputhram* which was a good but slow rendition. *Parvathi Kumaram* in Natakurinji was sung well with bhava laden sangathis. After giving a brief outline of Madhyamavati, Ramaswamy concluded his recital with *Pannaga Shayana* which brought out the grandeur of Muthuswamy Dikshitar's sahitya. The highlight of his recital was his rendition of rare kritis in rare ragas.



(l to r) Rohit Prasad (Mridangam), Rajeswary Shankar (Vocal), Vimarshini Jairam (Violin)

Rajeswary Shankar got off to a flying start with a brisk *Pavanatmaja Aagaccha* in Nattai. A very good alapana of Begada preceded *Thyagarajaya Namaste*. A good rendition of *Chandrasekharam* in Margahindolam was followed by *Parimala Ranganatham* in Hamirkalyani. *Sarasadala Nayana* in Khamas and a bhava laden *Shri Venkata Girisham* in Surati were the concluding items of Rajeshwary's recital. Her clear voice and perfect shruti alignment made the recital pleasant and enjoyable.

Both artists were given very good support by Vimarshini Jairam on the violin and Rohit Prasad on the mridangam.

S.Seshadri Memorial Talent Exposure Concert 22nd November 2013

Vasumathi Arvind



(l to r) Prajesh C. Nair (Mridangam), K.S. Lakshmi (Violin)

K.S. Lakshmi, a VII year student of the Vidyalaya began her violin recital with Patnam Subramanya Iyer's *Ata tala varnam, Evvari me bo dhana* in Sahana. *Vaagesvari*, a kriti by

Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar in the raga Saraswati, came next and Lakshmi played some good, crisp Kalpana swaras for the pallavi. Thyagaraja's *Lalite* was preceded by a sketchy alapana of Bhairavi. Niraval in one kalam and Kalpana swaras were played for "Teliyani". Lakshmi concluded her recital with Maharaja Swati Tirunal's tillana, *Geetadhuniku Thaka* in the raga Dhanashree. Overall, Lakshmi has to focus more on manodharma and play with raga bhava.



(l to r) Prajesh C. Nair (Mridangam), Damodaran Kutty (Vocal), Suguna Ramachandran (Violin)

Damodaran Kutty, a 2nd year Diploma student gave a very competent vocal performance which brought to the fore his innate gnanam, perseverance and application in perfecting the art. Beginning with the bhava laden Veena Kuppaiyer's Ata Tala varnam, *Sami nee pai* in Anandabhairavi, he went on to sing Patnam subrahmanya Iyer's *Korinavara* in Ramapriya.

Thyagaraja's *Emi Neramu* was rendered after an elaborate alapana of Shankarabharanam. Niraval and Kalpana swaras were neat and systematic. A brisk rendering of the Behag Javali *Vagaladi* by Tirupathi Narayanaswamy concluded Damodaran Kutty's recital. Overall it was a well-balanced recital. Suguna Ramachandran accompanied Damodaran Kutty on the violin. Prajesh C. Nair ably supported both the students on the mridangam. His tani was good, with gati bhedas in tisram.

Scholarship Awards and Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathiyar Day 7th December 2013

Vasumathi Arvind



◀ (l to r) Little Pranamyia Rajeevan receiving the Scholarship Certificate and Cash Award for Bharatanatyam from Smt. Santhosh Rajan, Convenor, Sangeetha Vidyalaya

The Annual Scholarship Awards have been an important incentive programme for encouraging students of the Vidyalaya and inculcating healthy competition among students and teachers. For the year 2012 – 13, there were 86 scholarship awards as against 31 endowments. 47 students of the Vidyalaya bagged scholarship awards out of which 25 students received more than one award. Smt. Santhosh Rajan, Convenor of the Sangeetha Vidyalaya gave away the scholarship awards.

A thematic programme "Bharata Naadu" based on Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathiyar's compositions was presented by students of Smt. Meena Krishnan to commemorate the 132nd birth anniversary of the great poet. The group rendering was presented by Ranjitha Prakash,



(l to r) Purnima Aravind (Mridangam), Students of Meena Krishnan (Vocal), Rajani Iyer (Violin)

Girija Subramanian, Madhumita Natarajan, Priya Raghavan, Dr.Rajam and Shweta Haridas. They were accompanied on the violin by Rajani Iyer and on the mridangam by Poornima Aravind.

The compositions, *Vande Mataram Enbom*, *Vande Mataram Jaya Jaya*, *Endhayum Thayum*, *Parukkulle Nalla Naadu*, *Mannum Imaya Malai*, *Sirandhu Ninra Sindhaiyodu*, *Thondru Nigazhndhadhu*, *Pozhudu Pularndhadha* and *Thayin Mani Kodi Pareer* tuned by Smt. Meena Krishnan were well-chosen and befitted the theme of 'Bharata Naadu'.

H. Subramanyan did an excellent job of compering the show. The programme was held in association with Bharati Medical & Research Foundation.

Read

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A Quarterly Publication of "Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha"

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	Carnatic	Hindustani	Total
Concerts	11,969	1,632	13,601
Duration	26,814 hours	3,450 hours	30,264 hours
Tracks	99,244	10,288	1,09,532
Size	1,511.2 GB	194.2 GB	1,705.4 GB
Classifications	345	323	668
Main Artistes Covered	1,045 Artistes	335 Artistes	1,380 Artistes
Accompanists Covered	1,182 Artistes	116 Artistes	1,298 Artistes
Venues / Sabhas Covered	356	41	397
Cities Covered	189	43	232
Years Covered	1928 to 2010	1935 to 2009	1928 to 2010
Tracks Format		Mp3 44.1 Khz. 128 kbps Stereo 16 bit	
Tag		Id3 Tag Version 1.1 and Version 2.2	

Summary of Videos

Classification	Videos	Tracks	Size
Carnatic	1,328	2,439	829.3G
Hindustani	241	394	124.7G
Devotional	1,334	1,677	433.3G
Dance	209	397	118.8G
All	3,112	4,907	15063.G

Total Size of Archives

Carnatic Archives (Audio)	1,511.2 GB *
Hindustani Archives (Audio)	194.2 GB *
Videos - All	1,506.3 GB *
Total	3,211.7 GB *



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